THE INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

EVÍL HAS A NEW FACE...



THE MARKET FOR COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES

Gamestation loses top personnel as GAME finalises its ultimate restructure

05 The Chaney gang

Industry vet Tim Chaney returns to UK with new online publishing venture

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Disney brings its first 3D game to market with Toy Story Wii

Issue 542 Friday June 19 2009 £3.25



14 'vision express Mike Griffith, VP of Activision's publishing side, discusses the firm's aims

Take Two on DS

CEO Ben Feder explains why GTA: Chinatown Wars can still rule handheld

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MCV takes an in-depth look at one of the channel's most vital sectors

EVERY BUYER ● **EVERY BRANCH** ● **EVERY INDIE** ● **EVERY WEEK**

INCORPORATING

New age ratings here 'in weeks'

Battle with politicians won, publishers fast-track 'traffic light' boxes

by Michael French

PUBLISHERS ARE already manufacturing games boxes with PEGI's 'traffic light' ratings on their cover - and hope to have the titles on UK shelves 'within weeks'.

By the end of the summer all new games released in Europe

The best system won.

Publishers are already using

the new symbols. They'll be

Speaking to MCV, ISFE boss Simon Little called the decision - which removes the BBFC from having any say in games classification - "the best result for UK gamers, games buyers and the industry".

A PEGI advisory board meeting next week will pick

over the finer details of the

in shops this summer. Simon Little, ISFE

will feature the colour-coded symbols, after the UK Government gave the green light to PEGI as the legal standard for games ratings as part of the Digital Britain report.

organisation's next move. Once the champagne corks have popped, that is.

"We are very happy with this result. The best system won in the end. PEGI was

always designed from the outset for games. PEGI is able to react to the games industry legislation and other systems just don't move that fast.

"We authorised publishers to start using the symbols as of last week - it obviously takes a while for them to work through the manufacturing system, but those new ratings will be seen in shops by the end of the summer."

UK Government backing gives the 'traffic lights' further weight, said Little.

"PEGI's influence is always growing in Europe - child safety is an issue which we will never rest," he added.

The decision by the Labour Government - which came after a year of consultation following the Byron Review's



THE NEW TRAFFIC LIGHT RATING SYMBOLS











www.pegi.info

www.pegi.info www.pegi.info www.pegi.info

publication - put to rest the debate that the industry is responsible about content and child safety.

"I believe we're already there with the new 'traffic

light' symbols," added EA UK boss Keith Ramsdale. "The logos are all signed off and ready to go. EA is 100 per cent ready for an almost immediate transfer to the PEGI system."

RETAIL'S REACTIONS



"This announcement will bring increased clarity. simplicity and

legal backing to the issue of age ratings on video games. Everyone who works in one of our stores receives thorough training about age ratings. We will await the full details of today's announcement, examine them closely and update our training programme as necessary. Meantime our employees will continue to give customers clear advice."

Terry Scicluna. COO, GAME Group



"We broadly welcome any measures that support a more consistent approach across

the entertainment sector. We will work hard to ensure that any changes to the regulations will be applied rigorously. There are practical considerations, though we won't know how significant these might be until we learn more about the new system itself - will it now move in line with film classifications? We may find we have to reorganise some of our training."

Tim Ellis. Head of Games, HMV

VSC GRANTED GAME POWERS

THE Video Standards Council has been granted new powers to help legally enforce the new ratings system. VSC boss Laurie Hall said: "The PEGI system works the system of films is not applicable to games. We're very pleased. It's taken long enough for us to convince people that this was the correct way forward, it feels great to have managed it."



INDUSTRY INSIGHTS



"Hats off to the Government, As the industry becomes focused online you can't expect

a UK regulator to classify online content. Retailers now have greater teeth when it comes to compliance in store. They didn't have legal protection before. When it comes down to what's in it for EA financially, it's not much - but, put simply, this is the system that best protects young people from inappropriate content. That's all we wanted.

> Keith Ramsdale, UK VP, EA



"We welcome the decision made today as the right one to protect children in the UK from

inappropriate games content. PEGI was specifically designed for games and making it statutory as the single ratings system in the UK should ensure there will be no consumer confusion in the future. PEGI also incorporates PEGI Online to address the unique issues of the interactive nature of video games played on the internet.

> lan Livingstone, Life President, Eidos

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[LEADER]

+

GREEN FOR GO

SO after a year of deliberations, consultations, on-message soundbiting, a bit of back-biting, and lots of politicking, the industry has got its way.

PEGI won, and will soon be the definitive standard for games

ratings, supplemented by legal support from the VSC. Undoubtedly, ELSPA, PEGI-parent ISFE and their board-members are delighted with the decision – and have called this a comprehensive victory.

And a win it is. At the very least it proves how united the publishing community can be – never before has the industry mobilised so vehemently on a single issue. Sure, some toes were trodden on along the way, the relationship with the BBFC obliterated – *MCV* was even branded an 'enemy' at one point when we dared to even talk about it.

But the minute a stone is thrown calling the industry irresponsible over age-appropriate content, ELSPA and co. came out in force - forget piracy, this was the issue that mattered to them. Well done on getting the message across.

AMBER FOR PREPARE

However let's not allow the victory cheers and steamrolling towards adoption of the traffic light totally drown out the chance to consider the impact on the actual creation of content.

According to the new rules, it's now partly up to developers to actively contribute to the rating process and help towards grading their creations. They are free to create what they want, but while BBFC-style censorship is gone, self-censorship might become more relevant.

Is there a chance the new legally-enforced PEGI will spur developers and studios towards more socially responsible, or even socially relevant, content? Maybe even publishers will now actively pursue it?

RED FOR STOP

But hang about, there was actually something equally - or, dare I say it, more important - in the Digital Britain report that edified PEGI this week.

Specifically: "The Government has committed to work with the industry to collect and review the evidence for a tax relief to promote the sustainable production of culturally British video games."

Publishers are nervous about any potential reclassification of what games are under financial incentives, but the Government clearly wants to make it clear it wants to at least help protect games development in this country in some way. There are no promises from them (and of course Labour's power life expectancy seems to shorten by the day), but it's a start.

Now there is an even more crucial line of dialogue to be sustained with Government about this (as for whether it's an ELSPA or Tiga thing - well, that's another battle) - which means it's time for another rallying call to the Government by the industry that doesn't rest, then...

Michael.French@intentmedia.co.uk

NEWS

Top brass lead exodus

20 employees take redundancy as restructure looms ● Rest of York

by Tim Ingham

GAMESTATION will lose its product director, head of preowned and buying boss in August, as its York office is integrated into GAME's Basingstoke HQ.

MCV understands that around 20 central office staff have taken redundancy at the specialist – after almost all employees were offered the chance to re-locate to the south.

Thompson has declined the opportunity to join GAME's HO, and has been snapped up by Asda. Meanwhile, Gamestation Direct and buying manager Frazer Locke and head of pre-owned Greg Walton are also set to leave the specialist.

GAME Group COO for the UK and Ireland Terry Scicluna said: "In January we announced plans to create one Group support function in the UK, to help GAME and

As expected, some of the Gamestation team have not moved to the GAME office. We wish them all the best.

Terry Scicluna, GAME

Approximately 60 employees – two-thirds of those offered relocation – agreed to move to Basingstoke, including sales director Steve Cunningham, IT director Andy Grainger, finance director Phil Ellis, senior product manager Anna Downing, online product manager Jorden Jones and head of operations Kevin Murray.

However, *MCV* understands that product director Andrew

Gamestation stores deliver passionate service and great value for money to customers.

"The integration plans are progressing well, and we are delighted that so many of the Gamestation team made the move to the Group office in Basingstoke last month.

"It included a great crosssection of people from all functions – IT, human resources, commercial, and an analysis of the second second

marketing, operations and finance. Their passion and skills are a huge asset to the Group, and we now have specialists from both brands working together generating new ideas and initiatives.

"As expected, some of the team have not moved to the GAME Group office, and we're

New distributor is Solid Gold

TWO INDUSTRY

VETERANS have formed a new games distribution company, Solid Gold Games.

Andrew Blumson and Russell Clark have set up the new company after more than a year away from the games industry. The two previously founded Just Distribution.

Solid Gold Games will specialise in newly-released software and 'closeout' products, working in conjunction with other UK and European distributors.

"We have kept in touch with many of the people who



BLUMSON: Ex-Just boss returns

we have worked with over the last 18 years, and feel now is the right time to re-enter the games market," said Solid Gold co-founder Blumson.

"There have obviously been a lot of changes in the trade during the last 12 months but we know there is room for another focused player.

"The time we've taken out has given us the chance to view the industry from a different angle – there are still areas with huge potential, which are obviously being missed by current distribution channels."

■ For a more in-depth look at the UK's distribution sector, head over to MCV's Distribution Special on page 21

NEWS

at Gamestation

HQ to join GAME's Basingstoke office in August



RESTRUCTURE: Gamestation will be run out of Basingstoke from August

grateful for their continued support through the transition and wish them all the best for the future.

"At the same time, teams from both brands have been successfully testing and integrating the IT systems between both chains, including installing new tills in all Gamestation stores, and we are on track to complete the full project by September of this year, as planned."

Gamestation's York office will remain operational after the restructure, housing a call centre and repair centre.

Chaney on the prowl for studios



FORMER Virgin
Interactive and US Gold
boss Tim Chaney has
returned to the UK to set
up a new online gaming
platform.

Zattikka will look to buy online games portals and studios after it opens for business on July 1st.

The venture is Chaney's first since he left Virgin Play in October last year.

Chaney masterminded Virgin Interactive's merger with Interplay Europe and eventual sale to Titus iin 1999.

"It took the video game business in all its evolving technology forms 30 years to become bigger than music and film," Chaney told MCV.
"It might take less than
ten years for browser
online/downloadable
gaming to gobble up
boxed games at retail, for
good. There will be no
comeback tour. No last
minute equaliser."

He added: "If you remember how Virgin Interactive threw away the 'how to run a videogame company' rule book, well, that 'fuck you and the way you do it' mentality is the starting point for Zattikaa – day zero. We have six or seven target acquisitions within the UK – starting next month with a smart team with excellent product output."

ShopLate | PlayTomorrow

TOP 10



UNCHARTED 2:
AMONG THIEVES

2. GHOSTBUSTERS

YNO2......

3. MODERN WARFARE 2

PS3ACTIVISION

4. MODERN WARFARE 2

360ACTIVISIOI

5. GRAN TURSIMO 5

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6. FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 4

60EA

7. FIGHT NIGHT ROUND 4

DC3 EV

8. OP. FLASHPOINT: DRAGON...

360CODEMASTERS

9. TEKKEN 6

PS3NAMCO BANDAI

10. HALO 3: ODST

360MICROSOI

Week ending June 12th Source: SHOPTO.COM

Demand drives Gamescom growth

WITH E3 OVER, the

European trade has wholeheartedly turned its attention to Cologne's big trade fair in August.

And organisers at venue Koelnmesse have already had to increase the floor space to match exhibitor demand.

The event takes place from Wednesday, August 19th to 23rd, with a trade-only opening day before it welcomes the public. GDC Europe runs beforehand from Monday, August 17th to 19th.

Gamescom has the full backing of German trade



NEW GROUND: Europe's biggest trade show is coming to Cologne

association The BIU and its affiliates, with Nintendo, Activision Blizzard, Ubisoft and many other publishers all set to exhibit. "The trade fair ground of Cologne is prepared for the premiere of Gamescom," a Koelnmesse spokesperson told *MCV*. "The stage is set for

Europe's new leading trade fair. All major players of the industry and trade partners will be at Gamescom.

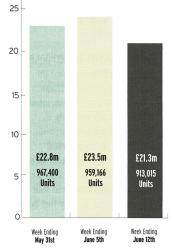
"More than 75 per cent of exhibition space is already booked and new exhibitors come in every day. Exhibitors from more than 25 countries have already confirmed to be present in Cologne on our 120,000 square metres of exhibition space.

"We have to open up two additional levels of our business center in halls four and five."

www.gamescom-cologne.com

[MARKET VALUE]

£21.3m



Total UK Software Sales
Source: ELSPA/ChartTrack and Intent Media

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NEWS

Now Disney eyes up 3D gaming

Upcoming Wii, PS3 and 360 titles include special glasses and could change perception of games, says firm

by Michael French

DISNEY WILL beat Ubisoft to the punch with its release of the first major game supporting 3D this summer.

But games boss Graham Hopper says the jury's still out on how quickly consumers will embrace such releases.

At E3. Ubisoft unveiled its 3D game Avatar, made with Hollywood legend James

G-Force, based on a Jerry Bruckheimer movie, is released in July. Toy Story Mania hits in the autumn.

Disney Interactive Studios' sister companies Disney Animation and Pixar have been part of a major drive behind 3D in cinemas as a way to excite audiences about the silver screen. Hopper says it could help consumers see games in a new light, too.



There is no doubt that, long-term, 3D and new interfaces will be a big part of gaming's future.

Graham Hopper, Disney

Cameron – but Disney was also demonstrating its Toy Story and G-Force movie spinoff 3D games on the stand next door.

He told MCV: "G-Force is in 3D on next-gen consoles -PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 versions come with the glasses included. Most important is



that you can turn it off, so players have the option either way or if they lose the glasses.

"I'm very interested to see what the consumer reaction will be. So far the reaction from everyone who has played it has been very, very positive," he said of the response from the E3 showfloor.

"3D's not easy to do – but there's a huge amount of expertise at Disney when it has been used in our movies.

"We were able to call on that for the development of G-Force. I see 3D becoming part of what people do in gaming as it evolves. But we'll listen to

gamers very carefully – and if

the overall trend towards new interfaces, as demonstrated by the Wii, plus Microsoft's Natal and Sony's Motion Senor controllers, said Hopper.

3D title G-Force (far left) hits next month,

with the stereoscopic Toy Story game arriving in the autumn

"There is no doubt in my mind that long-term 3D and natural interfaces will be a big part of the industry's future, but these changes don't

they say they want more, we'll deliver more." comes to 3D given the way it The industry's move happen over night." towards 3D gaming is a part of Disney: 0208 222 1413

Lygo launches new accessories division

OWN-BRAND HARDWARE giant Lygo has unveiled its third party division, Hubb.

The new peripherals label, which has sales offices in Southampton, will produce and distribute Hubb-branded products, including accessories for PSP, DSi and Wii Fit. Kits for other platforms will follow later this year. Trilogy has been signed as distributor.

"Accessories is one of the few growth areas left in the market and many retailers need to rely



on a consistent supply of quality product to support their in-store margins," said Hubb Accessories sales manager Mel Jones.

"Hubb has produced a core range of products designed for both bundle activity and standalone sales, and at great prices are designed to deliver increased profits to retail."

As an own-brand manufacturer, Hubb's parent Lygo has already sold over 30m units in Europe.

Hubb: 01642 204343

NEWS

GTA DS 'will have a long and successful shelf-life

Take-Two CEO Ben Feder tips DS title for long tail sales as title re-enters UK charts

by Michael French

THE CEO OF Take-Two Ben Feder says you should forget everything you know about how DS games sell.

That's because adult-focused games like GTA: Chinatown Wars prove there is a market for grown-up games on

title was written off by some analysts after it failed to instantly reach the top of the charts like console brother GTA IV did when it arrived a year before.

But retailers should think of the game as a year-round staple for the DS, much like the PSP versions, said Feder.

a nascent market" that is steadily growing.

"People make a mistake thinking that games on the format behave like other games, or that Chinatown would be like GTA IV, and

arrive with a huge bang and all the units sold in 30 days. That's not the way DS works we expect Chinatown Wars to have a very long and

Take-Two: 01753 496800

successful shelf-life."





People think DS games can sell all units in 30 days. That's not the way DS works.

Ben Feder, Take Two

Nintendo platforms - and that Rockstar's most recent release will be an evergreen seller like Brain Training.

His comments to MCV came just as Chinatown Wars jumped back into the UK All Formats Top 40.

Originally released at the end of March the handheld

"DS titles take a longer time to sell, the good ones have long legs and we expect this game to behave in the same way. And it's without doubt the best DS game ever made going by the total review scores."

He added that 18-rated titles on DS and Wii are "still

Ex-Empire IP coming to UK market

US-based New World IP

EMPIRE'S FORMER sales boss Vip Patel is to launch the UK office of Zoo Games - the company which purchased the defunct Britsoft publisher's IP in May for a bargain fee.

Patel confirmed to MCV that the subsidiary, which will be based in Bushey, Hertfordshire, will be called Zoo Entertainment Europe Ltd.

Its first releases will be former Empire titles Animal Paradise (DS), Hello Kitty: Big City Dreams (DS), Off Road (Wii) and Pipe Mania (Wii).

The offices are expected to open on July 1st.

"I'm confident that we won't face the same issues as Empire," Patel told MCV. "We're coming in to take advantage of the casual gaming space - the most lucrative space in games.

"We're predominantly releasing on Wii and DS, but will be releasing on Xbox 360 and PS3 next year.

"Retail missed out on these Empire titles. Now we've got them, and we can all hopefully make money from them."

The company's parent, Zoo Games, purchased Empire's remaining IP from mysterious US company New World IP in May.

initially purchased Empire's asked by New World's owners not to give out any details of licences from administrator the business to the press. MCV asked the CEO of Empire parent Silverstar Holdings, Clive Kabatznik, for details of New World IP. However, he told us: "It's

absolutely unequivocally not owned by or related to me in any way."

49 Empire staff were made redundant in the UK when the firm collapsed.

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activision.com

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NEWS

Warner Bros targets DS success

Free entry into Legoland Windsor included with copies of Lego Battles • Scribblenauts secures E3 plaudits

by Christopher Dring

PUBLISHER WARNER hopes to achieve big sales on DS this year with new IP *Lego Battles* and *Scribblenauts*.

For Lego Battles, the publisher is giving away free entry tickets for Legoland Windsor. The vouchers indicate that kids can get into Legoland for free for every full-paying adult, and Warner hopes this will attract parents on a budget.

"Lego Battles and this offer to allow kids to go free to Legoland Windsor provides our customers amazing value for money holiday entertainment at a time when the family budget needs to stretch a little further," commented sales and marketing director for Warner UK Spencer Crossley.

"Lego Battles is a quality game guaranteed to keep the kids occupied all summer and the opportunity to save money going to Legoland Windsor extends the Lego experience for all the family."

The promotion follows the news that Warner's other big DS title, *Scribblenauts*, took home a plethora of E3 awards earlier this month.

for Innovation, while *Gamespy* and *GameSpot* voted it the Best Overall Game of Show. The DS title also secured two *MTV Multiplayer's* awards, including Best Original Game and Best Handheld game, while *1UP*

Lego Battles offers our customers value for money when the family budget needs to stretch further.

Spencer Crossley, Warner

IGN gave the game five awards, including Best DS Game, Best Puzzle Game, Biggest Surprise, Best Artistic Design and Special Achievement called it the Most Innovative Game of the Show.

"We are truly honored by all of the E3 awards," said 5th Cell lead designer Matt Cox.

BATTLE IT Voucher inside the second of the s

"Scribblenauts

will bring an exciting and completely original gameplay experience for both hardcore gamers and those who have never played games. We could

Scribblenauts and Lego
Battles are key parts of
Warner's DS line-up

not be more excited to
unleash Scribblenauts to

the world."

Scribblenauts is due on

Nintendo DS later in the year,

Lego Battles will hit shelves on

June 26th.

Warner: 020 7984 6389

Vidzone 'is a PS3 system seller'

IT MAY only be a week old, but already the minds behind the PlayStation 3 VidZone service are saying it can help sell hardware.

VidZone adds access to over 10,000 free music videos to the PlayStation 3 and officially debuted last week.

Most importantly, it's free to PS3 owners in the UK, Ireland, France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Australia, leading a number of commentators to liken it to new web-music service Spotify.

Users can construct their own playlists from the raft of tracks available. Once a playlist has been made, viewers can then sit back and watch their chosen music videos.

VidZone also allows users to download tracks as ringtones for their mobile phones.

The service was codeveloped with SCEE and

SYSTEM SHIFTING: Free music videos from artists such as Girls Aloud could boost PS3 sales

demonstrated to retailers at E3 as part of the console's growing roster of online services. It is supported commercially by banner ads and promotions linking to the PlayStation Store.

"VidZone adds an extra layer of compelling features to the PlayStation 3," SCEE's Antony Clark told *MCV*. "It makes the PS3 even more value for

money and will provide more reasons to buy the console."

John Jackson of VidZone added: "Our deep catalogue of music will complement the other entertainment offerings found on PlayStation 3."

Sony: 020 7859 5000

Byron takes SingStar job



SCEE PR manager Carly Byron is to leave her post to become product manager for *SingStar* at the company's central HQ.

Byron joined SCEE's product PR team in 2007, and has spent two-and-ahalf years in the job. Her last day is June 26th.

Earlier this month Sony announced that it will be releasing a *SingStar* game based around *Take That*, featuring tracks from throughout the band's career.

SingStar Take That is due for release towards the end of the year.

NEWS

Key shows aid Euro retail

Cannes and Cologne events follow E3 ● Brits join Eurozone peers in dash for Q4 info

by Stuart Dinsey

THIS SUMMER'S two most important European trade shows have tied up with *MCV*, as retail looks for local market updates following the global blitz that was E3.

Whilst almost all the leading UK retailers visited the Los Angeles show, new product and marketing updates for buyers across Europe are eagerly anticipated at IDEF in Cannes later this month and during Gamescom in Cologne in August.

Both shows have appointed *MCV*, with its huge pan-European reach, as international media partner.

IDEF runs at Palais Des Festivals from Tuesday June 30th to Thursday July 2nd. Exhibitors include Activision



EURO CENTRIC: European product details will be discussed at both the IDEF and Gamescom events

Koch, Konami, Microsoft, Nintendo, Sega, Sony, Take Two, THO, Ubisoft and Warner.

New product and marketing

Russians, Spanish and some UK accounts.

Gamescom in Cologne, meanwhile, is the key trade event for German, Central and Eastern European retailers, but UK chains and distributors will further bolster attendance.

Also a giant consumer event, Gamescom has appointed both *MCV* and *CasualGaming.biz* as its media partners.

The show takes place at Koelnmesse, starting with a

trade-only day on Wednesday August 19th.

An extra high circulation edition of *MCV* will be distributed in the Business Centre throughout the entire show, which runs until Sunday August 23rd.

Registration for Gamescom has already opened. Trade visitors should go directly to the event's official website for more information.

www.gamescom-cologne.com www.idefexpo.com

updates for buyers across
Europe are eagerly
anticipated at both IDEF and

Blizzard, Atari, Black Bean, Capcom, Codemasters, Digital Bros (505), Disney, Eidos, EA,

Gamescom.

IDEF is popular with French and Italian buyers, but also attracts Benelux stores,

Importing 'unlikely' to spook new Ghostbusters

ATARI HAS confirmed that the US 360 edition of *Ghostbusters* will be region free – but despite Sony's move to make the game a PlayStation exclusive in the UK, retail does not expect a rush to cash in on imports.

Though there is still a trade in import games on the High Street, retailers who choose to sell non-EU products can still face legal consequences.

"Any retailer selling imported games breaches copyright if the product is not licensed for sale in the UK," explained ERA's Kim Bayley. "The likelihood of 'being caught' would depend on the



The Ghostbusters game is exclusive to PlayStation formats in the UK

copyright owner knowing that the retailer was selling it.

"If this is the case it is for the copyright owner to take action against the importer. We would encourage all retailers to compete on a level playing field. However, we would also

encourage publishers to make product available should there be retail demand."

Importing was a problem for the industry in the past, when European release dates would be months or even years behind those in the US and Japan. However, with global releases commonly now separated by just a matter of days, the import business is now more an online affair.

"Many retailers have long severed their relationships with potential Stateside suppliers or have no idea where to look, other than on consumer online stores," *Game Guide* editor Chris Ratcliff told *MCV*.

Sponsored by



[IN BRIEF]

505 GAMES: ARMA II is the subject of a unique promotional tool: an online interactive video application that lets users choose their path through an in-game scenario. This is hosted on on CVG and GamesRadar.

KOCH: Playlogic has signed a new European distribution deal with Koch, which will see the distributor handle the publisher's upcoming titles in the UK, Germany, France, Italy, Spain and other European territories.

UBISOFT: Metaboli's catalogue of Ubisoft titles are now available via download-to-own, in addition to the established subscription service.

CAPCOM: The 'Monster Hunter Gathering Hall' opens on July 3rd. Situated on London's Charing Cross Road, the area will allow fans of the PSP RPG to meet up and play the newest iteration, Monster Hunter Freedom Unite, as well as downloading exclusive quests and meet the developers.

PLAY.COM: Following its triumph at the MCV Awards in April, Play.com has been named the Best Online Retailer in the Which? Awards for the second year running. Best High Street Retailer was awarded to John Lewis.



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SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP





















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CAMPAIGN OF THE WEEK

Sega's inventive new IP requires gamers to simply tap their way to victory, and the publisher hopes to see it perform strongly with its latest marketing drive...



TELEVISION

Television marketing campaigns have become standard over at Sega, and a ten day TV push kicked off on June 16th, targeting young children. The Let's Tap commercials are 30 and 20 seconds in length, and will appear on channels including CITV, Cartoon Network, Boom, Nick and Jetix.

PRINT

Sega has booked several single page ads in children's print press. The campaign began earlier in June and will run for two months.

ONLINE

The publisher has produced a bespoke microsite for Let's Tap in collaboration with Nickelodeon. The site will be open for three weeks. beginning on June 16th and finishing on July 7th.



TAP TV: 20 and 30 second ads are running on numerous channels

Sega's PR team has worked hard on a four-month dedicated consumer children's campaign that will feature editorials, competitions and other coverage.

The publisher has also seen some impressive review scores for Let's Tap. Gamesmaster, Edge and Eurogamer have all given the game impressive 8/10 scores, with Eurogamer stating "Let's Tap sits alongside Wii Sports as one of

the few worthwhile and interesting mini-game compilations in existence, and as a multiplayer classic for the

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MCV INTERVIEW MIKE GRIFFITH, ACTIVISION PUBLISHING CEO & PRESIDENT



Action Hero

With Guitar Hero and the return of Tony Hawk, plus debut racing game Blur and new action IP on the horizon - oh, and a little thing called Modern Warfare - Activision is a force to be reckoned with. **Michael French** speaks with the firm's Publishing CEO and president Mike Griffith...

Activision was out in force at E3. How does your line-up compare to the other publishers that attended? This is arguably our best competitive position that we've ever had. Our titles are strong, and competitive titles are a

little sparser than in the past. The expansion of our *Guitar Hero* franchise to *DJ Hero*, *Band Hero* and *Guitar Hero 5* is the strongest line-up we have had for that franchise – and then you couple that with *Modern Warfare 2*,

which we think will be the biggest *Call of Duty* title ever. Then take into account the innovative new *Tony Hawk* game *Ride*, and our entry into the racing category with *Blur*, and in total we're in great shape.

Guitar Hero is at three different iterations now – can it sustain that growth across multiple brands?

I don't think there is any doubt. If you look at what consumers want and our strategy of driving satisfaction against the 12m households that have already purchased *Guitar Hero*, then compare that with the number of households that haven't purchased *Guitar Hero*, but enjoy music... Well, in North America and Europe there are about 300m households. So with 15m we've only scratched the surface.

Products like *Guitar Hero Van Halen*, *Guitar Hero Metallica* and *Guitar Hero 5* are going to really satisfy that current 15m, while *DJ Hero* and *Band Hero* are drivers of audience expansion. That way you get into new genres; *Band Hero* is our first E-rated game in the franchise and is all pop music, whereas *DJ Hero* is our first step into hip hop and rap.

DJ Hero should also do particularly well in Europe where that is a strong genre of music — it is growing in North America, but is strongest amongst Europeans so gives us a major opportunity to expand that userbase.

The Rock Band brand was prominent at E3 with its The Beatles and LEGO spin-offs. How do you view the competition?

Well, *Rock Band* is the most similar title on the market, but *Guitar Hero* outsells it by four to one in the US; in Europe that number is ten to one. We have a large base of consumers who are excited about what we are offering, so we are focused on what we provide them and how we satisfy our consumers.

Why did you apply the games peripheral model to Tony Hawk?

Tony Hawk was very successful for nine years. It generated over a billion dollars in sales. But we had let the game become less innovative than we needed and we slowly lost our mass audience. So we took a year off to to bring innovation to the franchise. Tony Hawk is still a very relevant sportsman and franchise. He ranks right up there with other sports celebrities. And a skateboarding game is still very relevant with consumers.

What we came up with was *Ride*, and the core premise of that game is that anyone can skate like Tony Hawk skates.

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MCV INTERVIEW

MIKE GRIFFITH, ACTIVISION PUBLISHING CEO & PRESIDENT







Key Q4 Activision titles include Guitar Hero 5, Tony Hawk Ride and Modern Warfare 2

It's the same analogy as Guitar Hero, where you can feel like you are a rock legend, even if you can't play a single note; now with Ride you can skate the way a skating legend like Tony Hawk skates, but you won't break your head open. It's proving to be lots of fun, and the peripheral board, with its sensors, is very responsive. It's a thrill.

With these peripheral games is there not an issue for consumers that this means the price of games is rising? And retailers need to find space to store them. Do all these games not create logistical concerns?

We're not in the peripheral business for the sake of it - we're only focusing on peripherals when they define a magical experience that comes about when you marry hardware and software. DJ Hero, Guitar Hero and Ride just aren't possible without the peripherals. Trade customers are very receptive and consumers are excited when we create that magic. So when it is a holistic experience there is genuine enthusiasm - that's the answer. We do it when it's right, not because peripherals are popular.

On the flipside it means that consumers have to go to stores to

buy peripherals; it validates retail.

Well, it's hard to download a guitar! [laughs] I think retailers recognise the unique value those items have. I also think that retailers know - when it comes to the supposed threat of digital distribution – that in-store experience, the value of displaying products and seasonal shopping and gifts. Retailers are going to be around for a long time in this business. There's no question.

Retailers know that in-store experience and the value of displaying products means they have a long life ahead.

Mike Griffith, Activision

And peripherals are key to each format now - as the Wii, Sony Motion Sensor and Natal show. What's your view on the newer controllers?

I think that all of these new innovations - if they are successful in engaging consumers and bringing more $consumers \ into \ gaming-that \hbox{\rm 's good for}\\$ all of us. And we'll watch all of these new peripherals controllers closely and if we can make sense out of how they work and add value to our games, we will support them.

If they add more engagement into gaming that's a good thing for everyone.

Blur is Activision's first serious move into racing. What's your strategy?

We got into that category because we recognised there was a big opportunity. The consumer just wasn't being served. With Blur we're focusing on realistic cars and realistic locations, with fun and fantastical racing where there is a battle and power-ups to be more competitive. That's a very distinctive position, and one that all of our research suggests is new, different and compelling.

Why does Activision otherwise have a restrained approach to new IP?

New IP is risky – successes are great but most of them fail. So we take a very focused and deliberate approach to new IP. It's always part of our portfolio but it's a balanced part of it. We are very selective but we go through a checklist: is it global, is it franchisable, is it unique and compelling in this space, does it have the right developer? When we go through this process we greatly increase our chances – versus other publishers who are usually just throwing spaghetti against the wall.

It's hard to refute your assertion that Modern Warfare 2 will be huge. What do you do to stop that brand becoming stale?

It's simple: we make sure we deliver on breakthrough innovation. If you look at what Modern Warfare and its successor

World at War did. they innovated and greatly stepped forward each time - Modern Warfare 2 will be no different, it's incredibly innovative. But we have to be vigilant on that - do it well and you ensure the franchise has a long life.

What did you think of the

announcement of the new PSP? Can the new design restimulate publishing on that format?

Our approach is that we want to deliver our games every way and any way in which the consumer wants them. So we generally publish on all viable platforms. If the new PSP delivers a big userbase we will be supporting it.

All platforms have to continue to prove themselves. If Sony can deliver a strong userbase and a good following we will be there with games.



SHOW OFF

Activision might not be a member of E3 organiser the ESA, but the publisher went to great lengths to make itself known at the show, with huge banners promoting Modern Warfare 2 around Los Angeles Convention Center and a vast, busy stand.

Griffith says the firm keenly welcomes back the new, reborn E3: "I had a chance to walk around the show and see the first party press conferences and I am excited - I'm encouraged by the enthusiasm everyone has in the industry. So it's great to see the return of this big. enthusiastic event.

"And I was particularly encouraged by our presence - if you look at the traffic in our booth, it was clear the games we have resonate with the consumers and the industry."

You previously described your European revenues as 'underdeveloped'. How will that change?

We've been steadily growing our European business by adding more marketing and selling capability and establishing top to top relationships with key customers.

We've been expanding with better content that is more appealing to the European population – Guitar Hero is a great example where, in the March quarter, sales doubled compared to last year. And that was because we have done a great job of providing better music content that is more appealing to local consumers. That will continue with Guitar Hero Metallica and DJ Hero.

It's all about getting the right capability in place - which we now have - and now it's about delivering the content, which we continue to be focused on.

The game market is roughly evenly split between Europe and North America and that ought to be what our business looks like. But at the moment, Europe is about a third of our business. That's why we are enthusiastic about the continued prospects: because we have seen great growth but we're still under-developed.



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SUMMER CONSUMER EVENTS

An eventful year

2009 is rammed with gaming showcases designed to get UK gamers out of the house. **Christopher Dring** speaks to key organisers on the explosion in video game events...

THE GAMES INDUSTRY may be coming down from the highs of E3 and turning its attention to the wonders of Cologne, but there's still plenty happening in the UK to get gamers excited.

In fact, from LAN-based multiplayer tournaments to video game showcases, there appears to be more UK-centric consumer video games events being held this year than ever before.

And each one of them, from the everpopular MCM Expo to the new Game On extravaganza, is jostling for as much consumer attention and publisher support as possible.

SHOW TIME

However, despite the rising number of high profile events, the general consensus amongst the organisers is that there still isn't enough for the

UK's expanding video game audience.

"Whilst there are lots of events being held, if you discount trade shows, awards shows and LAN parties there's still not much in the way of choice for consumers in the UK," explains *Eurogamer MD* Rupert Loman.

"As far as we're aware there's nowhere else that allows you to get hands-on with as many games from as many publishers across all platforms as the Eurogamer Expo." MCM Expo partner Bryan Cooney adds: "There are a few events happening this year but most are focusing purely on the gamers; after many failed attempts at gamer specific events we think it's clear that 'gamers' is no longer a term that applies in today's market.

"MCM Expo is growing because our shows look beyond the core gamer to the wider casual and family players. You only need to look to the Wii and the DSi to see that it's a mass market, not niche one."

Towards the latter end of 2008, nigh on every game publisher, from Nintendo

Games events help connect consumers and publishers.
Gamers like to try before they buy, and families are always up for fun days out.

to Warner, took their Christmas line-up on a tour of UK shopping centres.

It was a clear indication that outdoor promotion was becoming a key part of publishers' marketing budgets, and it's this development that is sure to benefit this year's shows.

"Exhibitors are always looking for opportunities to bring content to life and consumers are looking to try before they buy," says Game On events sales director Lucy Wykes.

"Families are always interested to hear about fun days out for the children, and events such as this offer a complete package, with something for all the family to enjoy. We see Game On as the funfair of these modern times."

Loman continues: "Publishers can now interact directly with their core audience and receive hugely valuable feedback on their games, plus it helps build a relationship and trust between the publisher and the consumers.

"On top of that they can earn revenues from on-site sales and attract masses of press coverage too. Events

> have now become an essential part of video game marketing alongside advertising and PR."

GAMER CONNECTION
Yet game shows are more than marketing tools, they're also a great way to grow communities and encourage fans to get together — something that has become increasingly important with the explosion in online gaming in particular.

"Events are good for publishers wishing to support communities for their existing titles, which can be of an immense size, such as *FIFA* or *World of Warcraft*," says M Festival's operations director, Stewart Fletcher. "Exhibition is just one way of engaging though, and

EUROGAMER EXPO 2009

Venues: London - Old Billinsgate & Leeds - Saviles Royal Armouries Square Dates: London October 30th - 31st 2009, Leeds October 27th - 28th 2009.

Rupert Loman, Eurogamer MD:

Tell us about the Eurogamer Expo.

We saw a gap in the market last year for a consumer gaming event in the UK. There was nothing out there that allowed gamers to get hands-on with the biggest games of Christmas before they were released.

This year's event (our second) is an extension of that – featuring more games and more attendees, taking place in both the North and South of England.

What makes your event unique?

The focus of the show is on high quality playable games. We keep the price for gamers low, and because it's a *Eurogamer* event we can deliver an unrivalled core gamer audience both to the show and subsequently to the online coverage. We also offer fantastic value to publishers. They don't have to worry about organising and paying for complicated stand builds - we take care of everything for them.

MCM EXPO

Venue: Excel London **Date**: October 24th – 25th, 2009

Bryan Cooney, MCM Event Partner:

What is the background of the MCM Expo?

When we started organising MCM Expo, it was with a view to creating an all round entertainment event for the UK. At the time, there was no platform that linked the comic, movies, video games, TV and anime industries. Our goal was simple: to give the UK a show that created a perfect synergy for all of these genres, bringing their respective audiences together.

What makes your event unique?

We understand that sometimes shows like this and public sampling come last on the list of priorities when publishers are assigning their marketing budgets to their upcoming titles

So we work hard to be as flexible as we can, giving companies the opportunity to exhibit their games. For publishers it's unique in that we as a show are truly cost effective.

SUMMER CONSUMER EVENTS

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CROWD PLEASER: Events such as the M Festival and MCM Expo are great for getting the public to celebrate all facets of gaming culture

we often host tournaments, developer talks and feedback sessions with consumers. There are a lot of ways of getting involved in the event."

Cooney agrees: "MCM Expo should be a must for publishers especially ones that have on going titles and are community building. The shows are their opportunity to create meeting zones and encourage brand loyalty."

Consumer shows in the UK have become great ways for gamers to interact not just with the latest software, but with each other too.

Meanwhile, publishers can use them to build relationships with their target

market. This will help them to achieve vital feedback, while maintaining loyalty and strengthen their reputations.

And with the likes of MCM, Eurogamer, Game On and M Festival, there are plenty of opportunities to capitalise on the advantages consumer events can bring.

GAME ON LONDON

Venue: Earls Court London **Dates:** November 14th - 15th 2009

Lucy Wykes, Event Sales Director, Game On London:

Why launch Game On?

We feel the UK games industry has been calling out for an event like this for many years. We want to offer the industry and consumers alike the chance to come together under one roof and to interact in a really fun and dynamic environment. Mid-November is also a time when people are really thinking about their Christmas shopping and this 'try and buy' experience fits in so well with that.

What makes Game On unique?

This is the first show of its kind in the UK and rather than being focused strictly on premier gamers, GameOn! London will also reach out to the mass market; those people who don't necessarily consider themselves to be 'gamers' but who do own and play computer games. GameOn! will also play host to the grand finals of the largest competitive gaming events to ever take place in the UK.

M FESTIVAL

Venue: Stoneleigh Park **Date:** August 7th - 10th 2009

Stewart Fletcher, Multiplay Operations Director:

What is the M Festival?

The M Festival is the evolution of our longstanding series of gaming events. Last year we launched the first M Festival which opened up our events more to the mainstream, with a much larger exhibition and a number of outdoor activities. The first event went very well with over 7,000 people attending. This year we're hoping for the same and have already sold out the Bring Your Own Computer/Console

part of the event, with over 2,000 seats now filled.

What makes your event unique?

Our event combines both the hardcore of the UK gaming community with an exhibition and festival that attracts the mainstream and more casual gamers. It is a unique opportunity to engage both the key influencers whilst also reaching out to a much wider audience over four days.



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MCM Expo was the perfect audience for Batman: Arkham Asylum Eidos' head of UK Marketing, Paul Benjamin It was a great place to show our games to both gamers and non gamers. We can't wait until October! Ubisoft' UK Community Manager, Korina Abbott This May was absolutely packed, We'll be looking forward to October. Atari' UK Product Manager, Lauren Bradley



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DISTRIBUTION SPECIAL



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DISTRIBUTION SPECIAL: OVERVIEW

Business as usual

With recent turmoil highlighting how truly crucial distributors are to the games industry, MCV takes a look at how the sector is maintaining the flow of products to retail. **James Batchelor** reports...

THERE HAVE BEEN more than a few changes since we last looked at the UK's distribution scene. Companies have come and gone, new partnerships have formed and died – but the UK's games industry is still being serviced by numerous veteran and efficient distributors, ensuring that games make that final step from production to retail.

The closing months of 2008 can only be described as climactic for the nation's distribution landscape.

While all types of businesses were feeling the economic slowdown, the loss of a few key distributors stood to affect scores of publishers, vendors and retailers. Contracts were broken, jobs were lost and barriers arose preventing companies from getting their stock to store shelves.

The loss of Pinnacle proved that no one was safe. The veteran distributor was originally founded in 1992 and had spent 16 years working with some of the biggest companies in our industry, as well as the DVD and music markets.

The company was the first to explore the concept of 'exclusive distribution' – something which soon became an industry standard – and even trialled a co-publishing model with developers.

A MOVING EXPERIENCE

With some key accounts with leading publishers EA and Ubisoft lost to rival firms Centresoft and Trilogy respectively, Pinnacle's diminishing strength meant that the pioneering distributor was doomed to be the first major games distributor to become a casualty of the recession.

But perhaps the more devastating loss was the collapse of EUK. After the demise of the distributor's owners, the Woolworths Group, the firm was unable to maintain itself and promptly followed the beloved British retailer into administration.

The impact of this is best shown by the subsequent closure of Zavvi. The fledgling retailer, formed after a management buyout from Virgin Megastores in 2007, struggled to



PACKED SHELVES: The trouble experienced by some distributors hasn't dampened the flow of product into UK retailers

keep the business trading as its sole supplier was shut down, leading to the loss of a sizeable retail presence on the High Street.

It is a tribute, then, to the versatility of the UK games retail scene that things began to improve significantly as the new year came around.

Out of the ashes of such tragic developments, 2009 saw a new determination from retailers and distributors alike, who recognised new opportunities.

A mere six months after such a devastating end to 2008, the remaining companies are still going strong. Publishers and retailers left without a distributor are now finding support in new contracts with the surviving firms, and as a result games retail has remained healthy, with the likes of Centresoft, Trilogy, Gem and Koch assuring their clients that all is well.

Distributors such as Music Box Leisure are working hard to fill the void left by the fallen firms. In February, for example, the company picked up the retail accounts with Morrisons – formerly supplied by EUK – and announced it was looking for opportunities to work with more retailers.

It's a tribute to the versatility of the UK distributors that things have turned around for the sector this year.

Larger distributors have drawn up new contracts with various publishers, including those robbed of their former distributors by the economic turmoil.

Centresoft has welcomed companies such as Majesco and new publisher Nordic Games, Gem picked up the Oxygen account and Trilogy has formed a new partnership with City Interactive. As recently as last week, Koch arranged a deal with

European publisher Playlogic, proving that new developments in this sector are still ongoing.

Even smaller distributors on the continent are a beacon of optimism, showing that the retail landscape is not as troubled as once thought. Game Outlet Europe, for example,

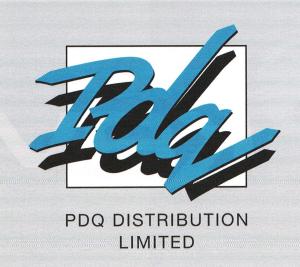
recently revealed that its annual sales have now six million units of boxed game products.

BOXING CLEVER

It's a sign that the industry has been able to move on and keep going, despite what seemed to be a dangerous and depressing situation arising as recently as last Christmas. Distributors are still working with an admirable determination to keep bringing new titles to retail and it will take more than these setbacks to stop them.

While the loss of former distributors dealt a significant blow to games retail, the companies on the following pages show that it's business as usual as we go forward.





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DISTRIBUTION SPECIAL: GEM

Diamonds are forever

Enjoying its 25th year of business, Gem continues to improve its services - and is expanding its scope beyond British shores. **James Batchelor** discusses the firm's first steps in Europe...

ONE OF THE longest-running games distributors in the UK, Gem continues to enjoy a well-earned reputation and a prominent position in the industry.

Founded in 1984, the company is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year with a number of key developments that will help drive commerce in the future.

"We have made considerable changes to our business recently, which have benefited the channel in a number of ways," says Gem's sales director Darren Houghton. "The formation of the Gem Logisitics and Gem Creative divisions provide flexible services, allowing our supply and retail partners to save costs and add value."

Houghton. "We also recently announced a 12,000 square foot expansion of our distribution facility—and our acquisition of French distributor, Banque Magnetique, has allowed us to expand outside the UK."

CHANNEL TUNNEL

Paris-based Banque Magnetique already stocks existing Gem brands, including Logitech, Creative and Pinnacle Systems.

The acquisition establishes Gem as a pan-European distributor, providing further growth opportunities for both companies and additional options to the vendors and publishers that hold accounts with Gem when getting their products onto the continent.

We can work closely with our publishing and retail partners, tailoring our services model to suit their needs.

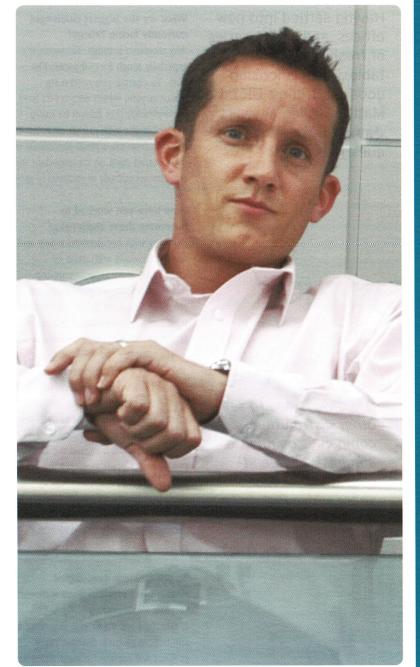
Darren Houghton, Gem

"We have already taken our first steps into Europe and will continue to build on this while investigating further brand and company acquisitions within the UK. Watch this space."

Of course, Gem is not taking such deals lightly and is fully aware of the perils facing the industry. Houghton recognises the current economic climate is by far the biggest challenge any business has faced in years, with competition is becoming increasingly tougher as companies endeavour to hold onto business.

However, the distributor is working hard to ensure that it survives this turbulent period and maintains the service its clients have come to enjoy.

"Our publishers and retailers are facing challenging times and are therefore taking steps to ensure they are continuing to be profitable," says Houghton. "However, we work closely with them and tailor our services model to suit their needs."



HOUGHTON: The Gem sales boss believes that the distributor can help its partners ride out the recession

customers with a broader range of supply services, including national logistical solutions that can suit the needs of any operation. The division despatched 18 million units of product last year, including titles from the distributor's key clients such as Microsoft, Codemasters and Take 2.

Gem Creative supports Gem's core sales function with a mixture of marketing communications, trade PR

Gem Logistics provides the firm's

established partners and retail

Gem Creative supports Gem's core sales function with a mixture of marketing communications, trade PR and planning trade show attendance. It also offers its clients a design and production agency solution that incorporates another essential process into Gem's route to retail. While these two new divisions have helped to strengthen Gem's UK business, the distributor has set its sights on expanding into Europe.

"We have an exclusive business development team which drives product into new markets," says



[CONTACT]
Tel: 01279 822800
www.gem.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION SPECIAL: TRILOGY

The magic number

Having settled into new offices, and with a series of fresh deals on the table, 2009 is looking good for Trilogy. UK boss Matthew Allen answers **James Batchelor's** questions...

•

It is always sad to see other distribution companies going into administration and over the past four years we've lost quite a few companies.

Matthew Allen, Trilogy

"



[CONTACT]

Tel: 0845 362 7769 www.trilogy-uk.com

What are the biggest challenges currently facing Trilogy?

Any recession is tough. However, it's especially tough for companies like ours. To operate you need a big infrastructure, which means you have big overheads that cannot be easily reduced in line with market expectations. Variable costs are a small percentage of your overall costs, so it's important that you plan accordingly or continue to grow.

How have you worked to overcome these challenges?

Planning with our partners is key, and we work closely with them to understand their expectations and forecasts. It's always good business practice to plan for the worst; you can then make commercial decisions about any re-structuring you may need to do.

In addition, continued growth is key and Trilogy has been successful so far this year within existing channels. But we have also been working behind the scenes over the past eight months looking at new opportunities.

In February we launched our Business to Consumer division within the DVD market and will roll this out next year to other channels. We're about to launch the second phase of TRILOGYi.com and we're now working within the music and book markets.

To what extent does digital distribution services pose a threat to your business?

It does to a certain extent. However, I still believe physical distribution of product will remain for some time. As well as games, Trilogy also distributes toys and books so we've got a foot in these camps too. Clearly digital is something that we'll keep an eye on, however, less than 10 per cent of album sales last year were downloaded.

How has the loss of other distributors, such as Pinnacle, affected your business in 2009?

It's always sad to see other distribution companies going into administration. If you look over the last four years we've lost quite a few, such as Prism, Andromeda, THE, Golds, Pinnacle and



EUK. I've always said distribution and operations is the poor step-child within the family, but the consequences of these companies going down can have a major impact on the entire market. A number of publishers have collapsed due to losing stock or payments because of distributors going under. Trilogy has picked up a number of contracts on the fallouts, but again, it's never good seeing so many people lose their jobs.

How has your business developed over the last 12 months?

Firstly, we acquired another business and moved from Radlett to Northampton over the summer. As well as signing more partners within our core market of games and DVD, we've gone and moved into music too.

Have you noticed any changes in the clients you deal with?

Clearly everyone is going to be a little more conservative as we all keep an eye on the economy. I believe there is still a lot of EUK inventory flying around so retailers may be taking advantage of this.

Do you have any plans for expansion in the near future?

Yes, we're just moving into book distribution and went live earlier this year. Operationally we are looking at mezzanine floors and system upgrades.

Tell us something about Trilogy that our readers may not know...

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DISTRIBUTION SPECIAL: DISCSTRIBUTION

Compact Discs

Discstribution has spent the past 12 months strengthening its operations, focusing on its online services as the best way to serve the industry...

DISCSTRIBUTION is one of the many companies relatively unphased by the perils of the recession. While the firm is obviously exercising caution, it is also not holding back from the opportunities for expansion and growth that have been presenting themselves.

The company has made some notable improvements, not only to its bricks and mortar operations but also to its online offering.

Crucially, Discstribution has increased its capacity, allowing it to stock and distribute more products than before.

"Over the past 12 months we have expanded our warehouse with the completion of two mezzanine floors and larger offices," says managing director Pete Walking. "We are stock holders and we now have the capacity to hold over one million DVD/game-sized units.

"Our team has also increased in numbers with several appointments that

enhance the offering of our trade website. The team at Discstribution tot up a combined wealth of industry experience of well over 100 years, and some of us feel that old occasionally!"

Online represents the best part of Discstribution's growth over the past year. Not only has it become more efficient, the company has shifted its focus towards the site, believing that it is the best way to serve its clients and set new examples for the industry.

"The business has been geared to change the way we work from the traditional phone and email sales to our 24/7 trade-only website," says Walking.

"The site not only has SKU listings for every video game published, but also covers the DVD, Blu-Ray, music and video game accessories markets.



"By July 2009, our clients will be able to order, back order, pre-order and source over 500,000 different items."

Recent changes to Discstribution's website include the introduction of product pages with detailed information and product images. The company also makes essential information readily available, such as stock status and guarded quantities, which Walking hopes

Discstribution wants to do away with the doctored Excel spreadsheets that get sent around the industry.

Pete Walking, Discstribution

will see an end to some of the most laborious processes in distribution.

"We hope to do away with the Excel spreadsheets that just get doctored and sent throughout the industry, devaluing the product as it makes its way from A to B to C and back to A," he says. "This activity does not do the publisher or the distributor holding the stock any favours."

Discstribution has also integrated new software that can credit check potential customers on the fly and ascertain credit worthiness quickly. It has also introduced 30-day credit accounts for qualifying businesses in the UK - more recently, this

has been extended to international customers. The firm also accepts credit card and Paypal payments to enable a wider array of customers to buy from them

Naturally, the distributor has been affected by the loss of its former rivals EUK and Pinnacle, but Walking and his team have taken a far more positive outlook on the situation, seeking out new

opportunities and partners.

"We have found that publishers, like us all, need to find new partners to sell their products, and can explore and open new channels," he explains. "With the demise of EUK, Pinnacle and S Golds,

there are mountains of product that has to re-enter the distribution channels, so although times are tough, there are enough opportunities to be seized.

"It is, of course, sad that many lost their jobs with the failure of these companies, but it has definitely opened the doors for us to represent more publishers and manufacturers and to supply a greater number of customers. In fact, we feel we are very well placed to facilitate an increase in revenues, and encourage any suppliers who are looking for a new pro-active distributor to contact us immediately."

Discstribution has moved its style from a traditional sales approach to a 24-hour trade-only website



[CONTACT]

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sic abs and video cames	
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Trading Name (if different)	
Date Started Trading	Please proceed to Section 3
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.Middle Initial(s)...

.Middle Initial(s)...

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Date of Birth

PostCode

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PostCode	
Delivery Address 3	
PostCode	
Adding Addresses here authorises Disastribution to delivery to these addresses - Please also add them to your account on the www.discstribution.com website	Please proceed to Section 4

SECTION 4 BANKING DETAILS

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Type of business - Retail / Distribution / Online / Mail Order etc		
Trading Address		
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Main Contact Email Address	Telephone Number	
Mobile NumberFax Number	Accounts Contact Name *	
VAT NumberWe send INVOICES, STATEMENTS and DEL	LIVERY NOTES by email - Please complete t	he following
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(Other Email Address) Please specify department (i.e Sales/Purchasing)		
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- d) We reserve the right to decline applications and amend or withdraw credit accounts subject to status and/or company policy.
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Please supply a copy of your company letterhead showing your registration number and registered address, if applicable

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Name (PRINT)

Position

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By signing this application, you agree that we can use your information in this way

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If you have any queries regarding this credit application, please do not hesitate to contact by email - accounts@discstribution.com or by Phone on +44 (0) 845 430 8755

You can download this form as an A4 sized PDF from www.discstribution.com/creditapplication.pdf
*100,000 at time of publication, increasing to 500,000 with addition of Music CD content pages in July 2009

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DISTRIBUTION SPECIAL: KOCH

Catching up with Koch

European distributor Koch Media to continues to support format holders, publishers and retailers alike as it seeks to strengthen its position in 2009. **James Batchelor** examines the firm's future plans...

THE INDUSTRY has thrived on the success of the Wii and DS. While already a dominating entertainment market before Nintendo's latest console and handheld was launched, the formats' ability to draw in broader audiences and new gamers has driven the industry in a way that many people previously only dreamed of.

Koch Media has made a habit of capitalising on this success. While far from dependent on Nintendo, the distributor can certainly attribute some of its success to the Wii and DS, thanks to products from both the platform holder and Koch's own developers and publishing labels.

Further proof of Koch's support for Nintendo can be seen in its Nindie.com division, now enjoying its third year of business. The division continues to support the all-important smaller and independent retailers with plenty of stock for highly demanded Wii and DS titles, plus a range of dedicated tools and services.

MOVING ON UP

The company has even pledged recently to step up its focus on Nintendo products, appointing new members to its sales team who will be responsible for selling Koch's titles into new markets. It is increasing its investment in both existing and new areas in response to the widening supply chain for the format holder's products, such as the newly released DSi.

Thanks to proactive
efforts such as this,
Koch Media has largely
been able to stave off
the perils of the current
economic climate, managing to improve
its business financially throughout 2008
and the beginning of 2009.

"The last 12 months have been incredibly challenging due to the changing retail landscape and engaging customer credit issues," says Koch Media's sales and marketing director Paul Nicholls. "However, Koch Media has seen growth year-on-year from our



NICHOLLS: Koch Media's sales and marketing director believes the casual market is reaching maturity

publishing partners and the consistent success of Nindie.

"We have also just expanded our sales and marketing teams with four new recruits who all bring fresh expertise and experience from marketleading games and music publishers."

Like many companies seeking to bolster their operations, Koch is

We have just expanded our sales and marketing teams, and have seen epic growth in the casual market.

Paul Nicholls, Koch Media

constantly monitoring the changing trends in the games industry. As a result, the distributor is able to identify key opportunities for growth and capitalise on the contemporary successes seen at retail.

Koch has pledged to improve its presence in the casual sector. This market, in particular, complements the firm's dedication to Nintendo.

"We have seen epic growth in the casual market, which is now reaching maturity," he says. "Koch continues its commitment to releasing products supported by high profile licences, such as the forthcoming *Coronation Street* game on Nintendo DS."

Of course, Koch is more than just a distributor. The company also offers

sales, marketing, press and PR to its customers. Releasing titles under its publishing labels such as Deep Silver, Koch is able to simplify the channel to retail for studios.

According to

GfK/ChartTrack data, Koch was in the Top 20 publishers by software sales value for 2008, outperforming rivals such as Square Enix and Warner Bros.

With Nintendo's formats still on the rise and Koch's versatility helping it adapt to any situation it is presented with, the distributor is set for another strong year as the industry regains momentum.

KOCH MEDIA

[CONTACT]

Tel: 0870 027 0985 www.kochmedia.co.uk

DISTRIBUTION SPECIAL: IDEAL

An Ideal proposition

With one of the biggest range of peripherals clients in games, Ideal Software believes it is well placed for what the future may bring...



BOX OF DELIGHTS: Ideal is confident that as long as consumers demand peripherals, the company is safe from digital distribution

66

EUK's demise forged better relationships between publisher and retail but the industry's credit insurers are still very nervous.

Paul Williams, Ideal

"

LET'S BE FRANK: The onslaught of digital downloading has got most distributors keeping an eye over their shoulder.

Should that route to market take off as some predict – and PC looks like the area in which is it most likely to dominate soonest, as EA for one reduces it boxed sports game output – the traditional, brick and mortar trade has good reason to be concerned.

However, most forward-thinking companies in this space have already begun to put into place a contingency plan – a hybrid of success in the digital space and skill when dealing with the High Street – that promises lasting success.

As exciting as these changes are, they come with a certain amount of risk attached – as well as the turbulence of altering the way your business model after years of sticking to what you know.

DEALING WITH DIGITAL

Ideal Software is confident that it won't have to experience any such agitation — as its model is already largely protected from the changes the industry faces.

"Digital distribution does pose a big threat to our software distribution business, as there would be no need for physical product," explains Ideal boss Paul Williams. "I believe over the next 24 months we will see a bigger push towards digital distribution.

"However, Ideal distributes probably the largest range of accessories in the industry, by some of the biggest names in that market. And they cannot be digitally downloaded."

Ideal's clients have included accessories giants Logic 3, SanDisk and A4T – and the firm says it has built up such strong relationships with its various partners over the years, little changes in its recipe for success.

"Over the 14 years we have been in business, we have already developed a high infrastructure that hasn't really needed to be changed in the last 12 months," says Williams.

"Really the only thing that changes is the products."

Indeed, the biggest news for the distribution sector last year — the decline of EUK — actually benefited the company, according to Williams:

"Of course the loss of these distributors has increased business by a small margin. In the case of Pinnacle we didn't really cover any of the catalogue so there wasn't a lot to be gained.

"EUK's demise really helped forge better relationships between publisher and retail. The real negative effect that its had is that it has made the credit insurers who cover this industry a little bit nervous."

If Ideal Software's working relationship with its numerous loyal clients remains as solid as ever – and the family-run business sees no reason why it shouldn't – the future looks rosy for the nononsense Bedfordshire business.

IDEAL GROWTH

Despite having no plans for expansion in the present climate, Ideal has noticed little difference in its dealings with clients because of the recession.

Elaborating on this Ideal boss Paul Williams says:

"We are working harder longer and in a more profitable way. We haven't noticed a difference in the way we work with clients.

"Everybody still seems present and correct - even perhaps a little bit more willingness to do business."

If he could change one perception about the distribution business Williams says:

"The idea that distributors are making huge amounts of profit. In reality, our profit share of a product in minimal."



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DISTRIBUTION SPECIAL: INTERACTIVE IDEAS

The **Ideas** factory

Specialising in the continually strong peripherals and accessories market, Interactive Ideas is looking forward to another successful year. **James Batchelor** speaks to marketing director Michael Breeze...

How was 2008 for Interactive Ideas? How has 2009 been so far?

We finished our last financial year at the end of April achieving another record year for the company with revenue up 45 per cent to £16.2 million. The expansion of our growing number of gaming peripherals and accessories and consumer electronics have contributed greatly to this growth.

What do you offer the publishers and retailers that work with you?

Our style and the value we add to our suppliers and customers means we work closely in order to support them by bringing innovative products to market and adding additional resources for them to drive sales. With the current economic climate this approach has been of more value than ever and, combined with our 15-year history in the industry, strong balance sheet and ability to make quick decisions due to being privately-owned, has proven successful for the retailers and suppliers we work with.

How has your business been affected by the collapse of former distributors such as EUK and Pinnacle?

Whilst we never really competed in the

same areas as either EUK or Pinnacle on a day-to-day basis, I think the loss of these and other companies has resulted in all of us looking at their partners favouring the proven long-term relationships over a short-term gain.

How do you overcome the biggest challenges facing your company?

Of all the challenges that are actually within our control and not related to the wider economic situation, then it still remains our task of staying relevant to our customers and suppliers. To do this, we position ourselves as a value-added distributor and so it's evolving our services to add something to our



customers and suppliers. Examples include what we have done with online content and marketing services or our online ordering and sourcing of innovative new products.

Can UK distribution be improved?

After spending ten years with Interactive Ideas, distribution can't be too bad. Often distribution isn't seen as the most

Our target for this year is to break £20 million in revenue. We're planning more office space to support our growth.

Michael Breeze, Interactive Ideas

glamorous area of the industry, but it is a fast moving area that gives you exposure to a great variety of different products, people and situations.

What is your view on the rising prominence of digital distribution?

I believe it's a threat and an opportunity. With Interactive Ideas' origins being primarily in the distribution of boxed software products, we have looked at how we can

protect ourselves by adding more peripherals, accessories and hardware that can't be downloaded, as well as growing our software licensing business to balance the risk.

Digital downloads or a software-as-aservice model are becoming an increasingly important part of distributing software products. But the content providers will still want to

> engage with retailers online and on the High Street as they offer the best route for many to the widest number of end-users. I see a key role still to be played by distributors, although this will be different, and

we will need to continue to evolve.

What are your targets for the next 12 months?

Breaking £20 million in revenue is our target for the forthcoming year. New staff have been added and we are recruiting more. Additional office and warehouse space is also being planned to support the growth we have experienced over the last few years.

BREEZE: Interactive Ideas' marketing boss says distributors must continue to evolve their businesses

interactive

[CONTACT]

Tel: 020 8805 1000 www.interactiveideas.com

DISTRIBUTION FOCUS: PROFILES

Order in the 'Court

Meroncourt continues to provide a route to retail for several of the UK's leading vendors. James Batchelor looks at how the company maintains its business relationships...

MERONCOURT

http://trade.meroncourt.co.uk

[CONTACT]

Tel: 01462 680060

THE ECONOMIC climate means that business is not quite as predictable as it was this time last year. Nevertheless, companies such as Meroncourt are still seeing growth.

"Business has continued to expand for us, although at a slower rate than we had forecast," says sales director Steve Walsh.

"Even so, we are still happy with our performance and see any growth over the past six months as a positive achievement."

The biggest change is in customer attitude. While Meroncourt maintains a healthy portfolio of loyal clients, Walsh has noticed that some have taken a more cautious approach, something he believes may not be for the best.

"We have noticed a higher reluctance from our customers to try new product lines and new ideas," he says. "I think

it's because they want to play it safe and minimise their risk exposure.

"I can understand this but they may need to make some major decisions on change when we move away from these constraining economic times. Otherwise they will lose market to those retailers who offer something new to the market."

EDUCATING RETAILERS

The most notable problem Meroncourt faces is maintaining the good business relationships that guarantee its clients have a clear path to retail.

He says: "Our biggest challenge is the same as it has always been and that is to convince retailers that it's quality of product that guarantees repeat business and helps develop customer loyalty - not low prices and poor quality products.

Member



Sales director Walsh believes retailers should still be willing to take risks

"We overcome this by education, by offering customers a sale or return guarantee and by showing them end user reviews and comments on our product lines. We are never the lowest priced, but how many distributors have been successful for nearly 20 years?"



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PERSONNEL

Debbie O'Neill leaves Comet games team

O'Neill swaps games for laundry • Sega promotes four marketing execs • GDC Europe appoints advisor



COMET DEBBIE
O'NEILL has
departed from

her position in Comet's games team for new opportunities elsewhere in the company.

O'Neill worked for 18 months within the retailer's games department, but now leaves her role as category buyer for games to be Comet's new laundry buyer. She is succeeded by **PAUL BANGS**.

She was previously a member of the *MCV* Retail Advisory Board, where she contributed key information and expert opinion.





SEGA ■ Four key personnel have been promoted at Sega, as the publisher continues to grow.

AMANDA FARR takes up the role of UK marketing director, alongside JO FAWELL who is promoted to UK marketing manager. CLARE HAWKINS has been named the new head of channel marketing, while BEN PAYNE has been appointed senior product manager.





"As the market changes and Sega has growth aspirations, it's vital that we strive to stay on the front foot," said Sega UK's managing director JOHN CLARK. "There are so many opportunities and challenges with reaching our target consumer. The exciting developments within the

"Sega has great people and we're ensuring that we establish

marketing department reflect our

intentions to embrace this.

the right team to drive our growth amidst what could prove to be a challenging year for the industry."

GDC EUROPE ■ The organisers of Game Developers Conference Europe have named AVNI YERLI as the latest member of their advisory board.

Yerli co-founded *Far Cry* development studio Crytek in 1999, where he currently works as managing director.

"I am flattered to have joined the GDC Europe advisory board and looking forward to working with a talented group of advisors," said Yerli. "Together with their strong opinions and vision, I am confident that the advisory board can create a conference that will hit the industry's nerve."

THQ ■ SCOTT GUTHRIE

has left the company's US arm and his position of executive vice president of publishing.

Guthrie was in charge of North American sales, distribution and marketing, and has departed in order to "pursue another opportunity".

THO's chairman, president and CEO **BRIAN FARRELL.** "We wish Scott well in his future endeavours."

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News

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Nintendo is a pioneer in the creation of interactive entertainment. Nintendo manufactures and markets hardware and software for its WiiTM and Nintendo DSTM systems. Our development is based on creative ideas for games and we realise them with a highly motivated team on an international level.

Our European Distributor Business department in Frankfurt am Main (Germany) is looking for a

Territory Development Co-ordinator (m/f)

The EDB department within Nintendo of Europe is tasked to service, manage and drive business forward within countries in the EMEA where Nintendos' product distribution is handled by independent companies. This wide and varied position provides the successful candidate with overall responsibility for a group of territories within the department, managing all aspects of the business relationship with local distribution partners, including but not limited to developing local strategy, product forecasting, marketing, negotiation and internal reporting.

You will be responsible for successfully expanding Nintendos business and presence within each territory towards it's maximum potential. This vacancy would suit applicants with a solid background in either business development, account management, or marketing. You will possess strong financial and analytical skills and be a flexible and skilled negotiator, with very good communication skills in written and spoken English.

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be inspired





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Plus this year there's innovative new content with the launch of **EVOLVE** - a new one-day event which will open the Develop Conference on Tuesday 14 July and a new track within the conference on Wednesday 15 July.

Here's a taste of this year's programme:





Conference Keynote David Jones, Founder, Realtime Worlds





Keynote The Art of LittleBigPlanet - A Big Medley



Kareem Ettouney and Mark Healey, Co-founders, Media Molecule





Keynote The Runtime Studio in Your Console:The Inevitable Directionality of Game Audio

Guy Whitmore, Director of Audio, Microsoft Game Studios





Keynote Out of the Box(ed Product): Thinking for an Online Age Jeff Hickman, Executive Producer, Mythic **Entertainment**





Open Software for Closed Hardware Steve Goodwin, SGX Engine





Keynote Building LEGO Worlds - online, offline, and everything in between Jonathan Smith, Development Director, Travellers Tales





Keynote Resetting the Game David Perry, Industry Consultant

Keynote Bridging The Gap









across Multisite, Multicultural and **Multilingual Project** Lisa Charman, Ubisoft and Patric Palm, Hansoft





Making Videogames History: Starting the National Videogames Archive lain Simons, National Videogame Archive

Other speakers confirmed include:

Autodesk • Bizarre Creations • Blitz Games • Chillingo • Climax • Creative Assembly • comScore • Crytek • Denki • Disney Black Rock Studios • Eutechnyx • Fishlabs • FluffyLogic • Glu Mobile • Google • Guerrilla Games • Gusto Games • ICO Partners • Kerb • Lightning Fish Games • Lionhead • Matmi • MySpace • Nokia • Mediatonic • Microsoft • ngmoco • Playfish • Rare • Team 17 The Mustard Corporation
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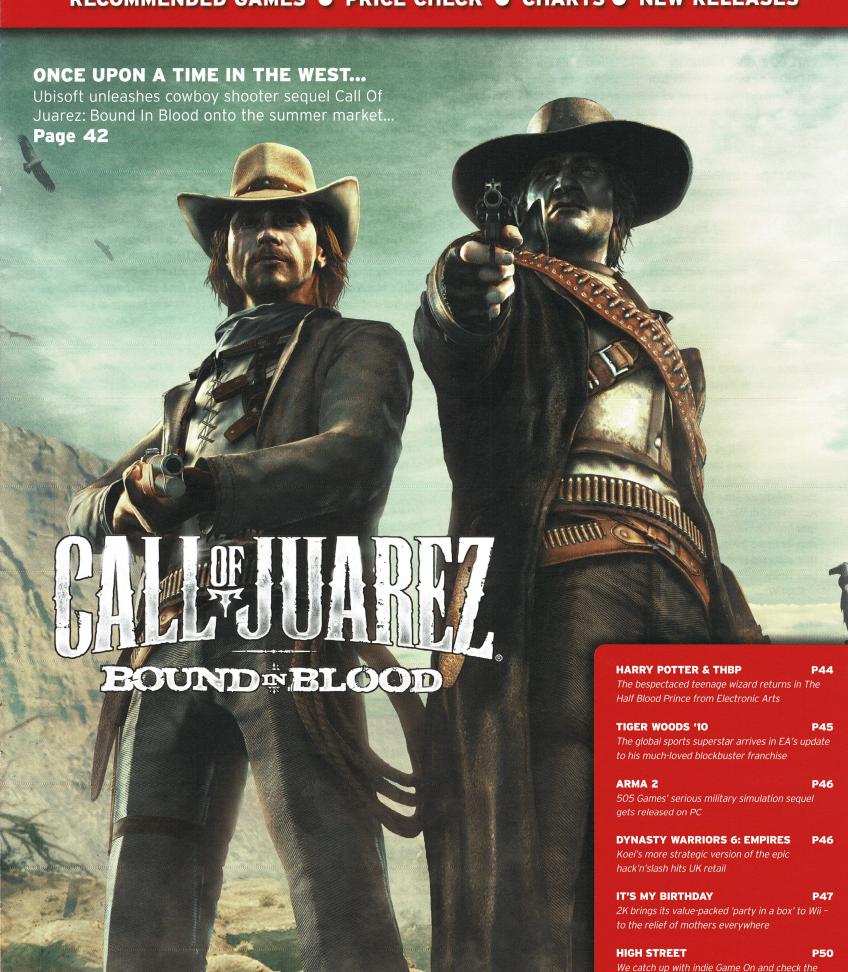
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Ubisoft offers FPS fans a fresh take on the genre by taking them back to the Wild West - a darstardly, barren place that's full to the brim with outlaws, in-fighting and lots and lots of weapons that go bang...

by James Batchelor

CALL OF JUAREZ: BOUND IN

BLOOD is the sequel to Ubisoft's 2007 original, with action that focuses on chaotic gunfights in a setting rarely visited by the FPS genre – the Wild West.

Players are invited to trade in their war-torn European villages and alien worlds for the dusty plains and rocky mountains of the cowboy's realm in a title that the publisher believes is one of the strongest games to arrive this summer.

"Bound In Blood is one of those titles that has a lot of heart," explains
Ubisoft's brand manager Matt Benson.
"Commercially we believe this title is going to be extremely successful. It has fantastic visuals, an extremely strong narrative, and a lot of time and effort has gone into building a compelling single-player story in a unique setting. From bandits to gunrunners, through stagecoach chases, prison breaks and hold-ups, it has it all."

The game follows the story of Ray and Thomas McCall, two brothers in the Confederate Army fighting in the American Civil War. When they hear their home in Georgia has come under siege by Union forces, the two desert their posts and head home to rescue their family.

Since Westerns are part of such a cherished narrative genre, Ubisoft has taken care to ensure the game has

RELEASED: JULY 3
FORMATS: 360, PS3, PC
PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: TECHLAND
PRICE: £39.99 (XBOX 360, PS3)

£24.99 (PC)

DISTRIBUTOR: TRILOGY

CONTACT: 0845 362 7769

everything you would expect from such a tale. As a result, fans of Clint Eastwood and pals should be more than satisfied with *Bound In Blood*, while avid gamers will find a fresh challenge in an increasingly stale genre.

"At its core, *Bound In Blood* is a strong first-person shooter, with some intense shootouts and extremely tense standoffs, which is what the old West was known for," says Benson.

"There's an arsenal of revolvers, rifles, gatling guns and cannons also to keep FPS fans happy.

"One of the coolest elements is the dynamic cover system, which allows players to take cover during those intense gunfights and edge out to find

From bandits to gunrunners, stagecoach stages to prison breaks; this game really does have it all.

Matt Benson, Ubisoft

the best shot. It's going to make for some great multiplayer shootout moments."

NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN

The range of multiplayer modes provides everything shooter fans expect, ranging from classic deathmatch to Benson's personal favourite, Wild West Legends. This mode plays up to the setting's heritage by recreating classic historical events, such as the gunfight at the OK Corral.

While the summer is usually a quiet time for games retailers, Ubisoft is confident that *Bound In Blood* will meet with commercial success. The game's well-timed release ensures that it will be prominent enough to capture the attention of its target audience.

"We think that this title is going to be a sleeper summer hit and will provide a pre-O4 gaming fix for both FPS fans and action gamers alike, with a compelling 12-hour single-player campaign that offers immense replay value and a variety of multiplayer modes that will keep it out of the bargain bin," he says.

"It's going to be the perfect title for those post A-Level/GCSE/university examinees to kick back with as well as appealing to long-time Western fans."

As one of the publisher's biggest titles this quarter, *Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood* will be supported by Ubisoft's full marketing weight. The overall campaign will be heavily targeted at core gamers and fans of the original, and will be

focused around the TV promotions.

"We've got a TV campaign with a solid launch weight booked, delivering wide audience coverage during the week up to launch and beyond,"

says Benson. "We've also got a real piece of standout TV creative in my opinion.

"We've engaged the core community early on, with specialist print to drive pre-awareness and pre-order in the months up to launch. We will also have strong in-store presence throughout the launch period, and various pre-order campaigns running online."

Ubisoft will utilise media across various specialist sites starting a week before launch. A range of promotional tools will include a flash mini-game and an iPhone app that will be pushed across lifestyle online media.

A rich, focused specialist PR and community campaign with plenty of assets has resulted in plenty of coverage for the game. However, the publisher has one last trick up its sleeve that should prove to raise the *Call Of Juarez* marketing above the standard of similar initiatives.

"We'll be positioning the launch day as the day of the Gold Rush," explains Benson. "We're giving away £10,000 worth of solid gold, gold-plated iPods and games consoles. This activity is tagged across all media including the TV, and will drive consumers to a destination at Juarezgold.com shortly before launch."

Fans of both the original game

and the first-person shooter genre are certain to be keeping an eye on Bound In Blood, and with Ubisoft's extensive marketing plans raising awareness in the run-up to launch, expect the game to perform well when ce released.

HAPPY TRAILS

With its intense gunfights, saloon brawls and horseback chases, the Wild West is the perfect setting for video games, but surprisingly few titles have explored the prairie land's potential. Recent notbale exceptions include:

Red Dead Revolver (2004): Rockstar's third-person shooter was a PS2 and Xbox title that combined gunfights with its Bullet Time-style Dead Eye mechanic.

Gun (2005): This ambitious Activision title offered a more open-world take on the genre, giving players a Wild

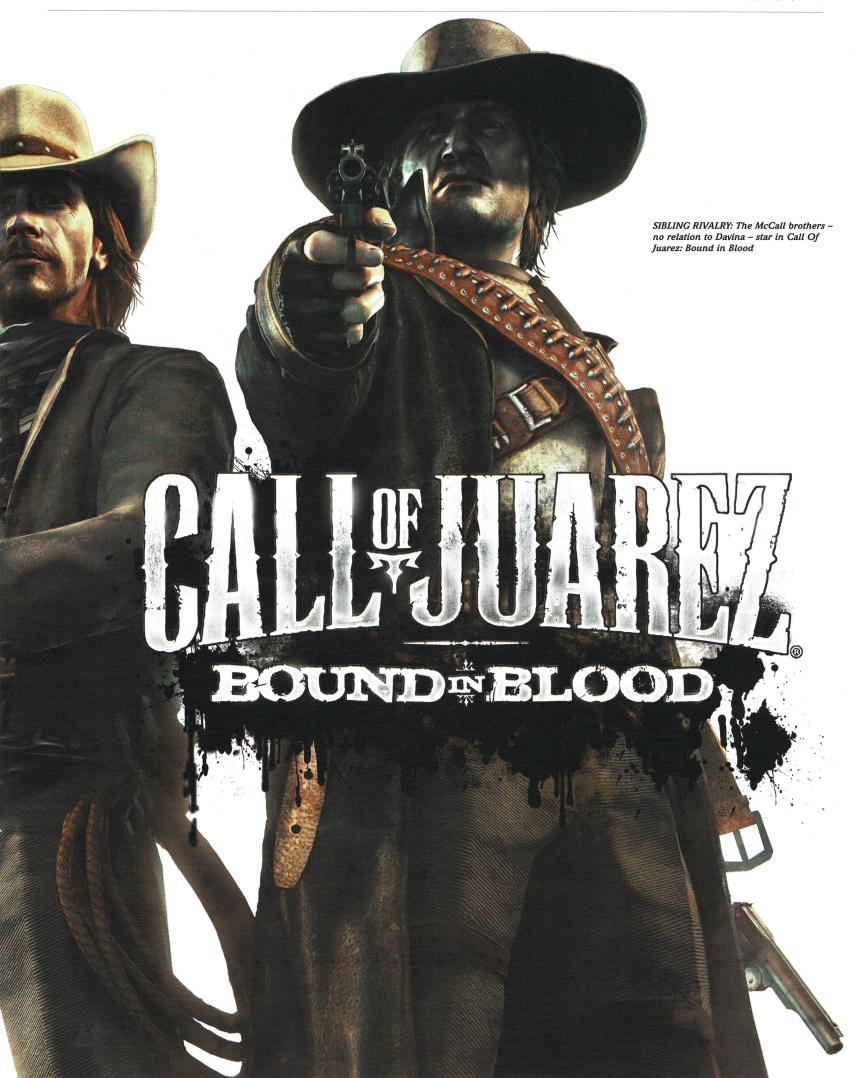
West sandbox to explore on their very own horseback.

Call Of Juarez (2007): *Bound In Blood's* predecessor, this FPS was well received by 360 and PC owners.

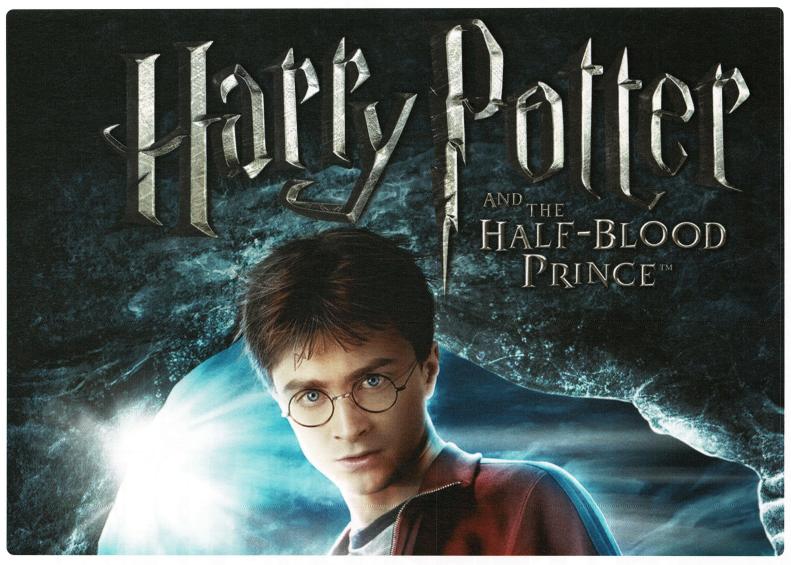
Damnation (2009): Codemasters' steampunk vision of the Wild West,

where gamers are thrown into frantic battles where acrobatic stunts are the only escape from the enemy.

Red Dead Redemption (TBC): Rockstar's sequel to the original *Red Dead* game will offer a larger openworld to explore – and has *GTA* fans chomping at the bit. WWW.MCVUK.COM MCV 19/06/09 43



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The Boy Who Lived returns to cinemas, with fans invited to relive his adventures in EA's Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince...

by James Batchelor

HARRY POTTER is the biggest movie licence of the summer, and expectations are just as high for EA's latest digital outing for the students of Hogwarts. With millions of fans around the world eagerly waiting for the next adventure, the game has a guaranteed audience in place as it approaches release.

While many games are rushed to meet the movie's deadline, *Half-Blood Prince* has had the rare luxury of extra development time after the film was delayed.

"As the sixth instalment in the *Harry Potter* series, anticipation for the *Half-Blood Prince* is building," says EA's UK product manager Alice Brandvik. "The film is looking amazing and the studio has done an amazing job bringing it to life.

"The storyline is as engaging as ever with Harry travelling with Dumbledore to piece together Voldermort's past and uncover the secrets of the Half-Blood Prince. We're excited for the launch of the game alongside the film."

EA has paid attention to feedback from consumers and press in developing *Half-Blood Prince*. As a result, elements from the previous game make a welcome return and have been updated to suit the new storyline – most notably, the ability to explore Harry Potter's world in a free-form structure.

"As with *Order Of The Phoenix*, Hogwarts is fully recreated, enabling

We're working closely with Warner Bros on their plans for the film to accentuate the authenticity of the game. Alice Brandvik, EA

players to explore the magical grounds at their leisure and truly experience the students' magical world. This year, potions are a key driver in the storyline: Harry finds the mysterious Half-Blood Prince's potions book, so mixing and creating them is central to your task."

Players will get to experience every form of magic from the books and films. As well as mixing potions, they will also learn to perform crucial spells that will be essential to both puzzle solving and $\begin{array}{ll} \text{combat}-\text{with the Wii and DS versions} \\ \text{utilising their unique control schemes to} \\ \text{make the magic even more immersive.} \end{array}$

As they progress through the game, gamers will have to attend Harry's lessons in order to improve their skills. These will help them in the main questline as he and Dumbledore attempt to unlock Voldermort's darkest secrets. And when they're not in the

mood for death and danger, players can enjoy a range of extra-curricular activities.

Potter fever is set to return as the new film approaches. Awareness will already be high, but EA is determined to ensure that

the game is as prominent as possible.

"As you'd expect with a *Potter* title, the game will have a significant marketing campaign to support the launch and the run-up to Christmas. We have a mix of cinema, TV, print and online advertising planned in, as well as significant retail marketing and PR programmes. We're working closely with Warner Bros on their plans for the film launch to really accentuate the authenticity of the game."

RELEASED: JULY 3

FORMATS: 360, PS3, WII, PS2, PSP, DS, PC

PUBLISHERELECTRONIC ARTS
DEVELOPER: EA BRIGHT LIGHT
PRICE: £29.99 - £49.99

DISTRIBUTOR: CENTRESOFT CONTACT: 0121 625 3388

WWW.MCVUK.COM MCV 19/06/09 45

The world's foremost man of golfing returns for another trip to the green, as EA's Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10 steps up to the tee...

by James Batchelor

EA SPORTS HAS has been leading the way in several genres for many years. In terms of golf, there is little to no competition for the *Tiger Woods* series and yet the publisher goes out of its way each year to top the previous offering.

For its 2010 offering, EA has given the game a complete overhaul, adding in new modes, features and controls that will not only satisfy long time *Tiger* fans and golfing aficionados but also newcomers to the franchise. The Wii version, in particular, has been positioned to appeal to a more casual gaming audience.

As with previous editions, *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10* will revolve around its tournament mode, in which players take part in real-life golfing events in the hopes of becoming champions.

This year, fans will get to take part in the US Open for the first time in the series' history. Inviting them to the Bethpage State Park Black Course, *Tiger Woods 10* challenges them to take on one of the toughest courses in America. Only by honing their skills will they be able to take the trophy.

BACK TO SCHOOL

There is also a new character progression mode that allows fans to relive key moments in the history of various golfing tournaments, including some of Tiger Woods' most famous plays. Players can either recreate the moment or take their own approach, and Mr Woods himself is even on hand to offer his personal insight and expert tips.

Other courses also appear, appealing to the series' international fans, including that of Turnberry, Scotland – the venue for this year's British Open. This not only provides a fresh challenge once players have conquered the US Open, it also keeps the game relevant for UK and European audiences who may not be too familiar with the annual American golf tournament.

The competitions are presented in the style of a television broadcast. The course will be introduced with hole overviews with up-to-the-minute updates popping up on screen, reporting on the player's



EA has given Tiger Woods a complete overhaul, adding new features that will not only satify long time fans but also draw in a more casual audience.

ence.

progress and other events from the tournament. The game even features a full commentary team with ESPN's Scott Van Pelt and The Golf Channel's Kelly Tilghman.

The presentation isn't the only aspect that has been given new attention to detail. The in-game environments have been enhanced to make the player feel even closer to the course. Crowds have been expanded and will react to the golfer's performance, and real-time weather effects recreate the current real-world conditions in game. This will even affect gamers' performances – for example, putts will roll much slower on wet greens.

Each version of the game has its own unque features and additions that take advantage of their respective platforms. The Xbox 360 and PS3 editions obviously tap into the competitive nature of their audiences with online leaderboards and live tournaments available in three forms: daily, weekly, and Play the Pros. While the first two

RELEASED: JULY 3

FORMATS: 360/PS3/Wii/PS2/PSP PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS DEVELOPER: EA TIBURON

PRICE: VARIOUS

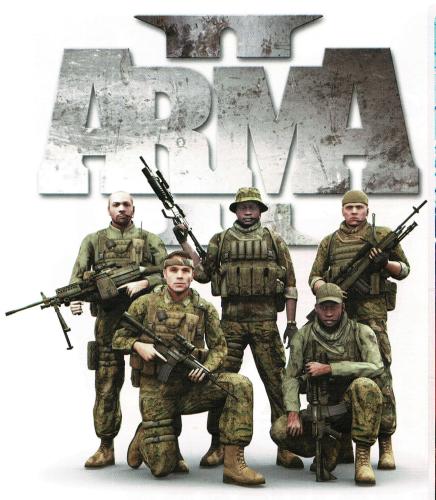
DISTRIBUTOR: CENTRESOFT **CONTACT:** 0121 625 3388

are self-explanatory, Play the Pros sees gamers posting their scores against the real-life scores of PGA Tour golfers during the actual professional event.

The Wii version has special significance as it will be the third title to use the new MotionPlus peripheral, offering more accurate controls and arriving ahead of Nintendo's own flagship title, Wii Sports Resort. Golfing fans will be able to recreate their real-life style more effectively as the MotionPlus picks up subtler motions and angles, and calculates how these will affect the ball's trajectory.

The game also includes a Frisbee Golf mode developed exclusively for Wii, which will tap into the multiplayer mentality many Wii sports games boast.

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505 Games prepares to deliver the acclaimed and realistic tactical war game to PC gamers this week...

by Christopher Dring

THE ORIGINAL ARMA: Armed Assault was a big success for developer Bohemia when it was released back in 2007.

The press praised it for its realistic action and beautiful graphics, and PC gamers were quick to snap it up. So a sequel was inevitable, especially with an established fanbase, and ARMA II is already receiving positive reviews from the press.

"Although we have always had high expectations for ARMA II they have increased significantly over the last few months owing to retail and press excitement for the product as well as anticipation within the established ARMA fan-base," said 505 Games' UK product manger Dan Cooke.

"We are confident that ARMA II will consolidate its position as the leading military sim on the market. In fact, a testimony to the quality and realism is the fact that the British Ministry of Defence use Bohemia's technology as a training tool for soldiers."

Although the game boasts deep gameplay, Bohemia is also keen to attract new users with an intuitive system for those with little experience of ARMA. Multiplayer is also a major part of the game, with maps allowing for 32 players – which is sure to double when the community begins developing their own content.

MARKETING MANOEUVRES

505 is also putting its money where its mouth is, with an online and print marketing campaign that targets major websites and key magazines.

"We have created a game that appeals to ARMA fans and embraces new audiences," concludes Cooke.

"By accommodating a broad audience we anticipate that this will translate to the overall success at retail. There's a great buzz online and we plan to build on this before the launch."

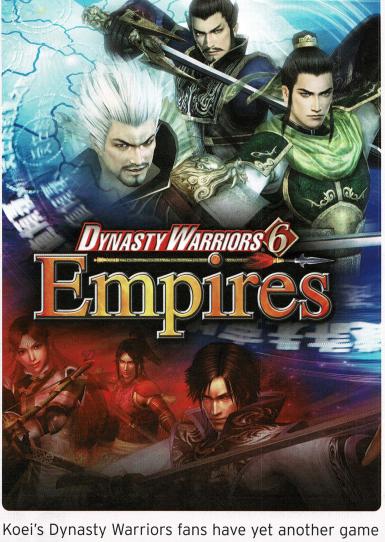
RELEASED: JUNE 19 FORMATS: PC

PUBLISHER: 505 GAMES

DEVELOPER: BOHEMIA INTERACTIVE

PRICE: £29.99

DISTRIBUTOR: ADVANTAGE CONTACT: 0121 506 9585



to look forward too with Empires on PS3 and 360...

by Christopher Dring

NOT A MONTH appears to go by this year without Koei releasing yet another top quality Dynasty Warriors title.

The hack and slash franchise is one of Japan's biggest selling game series, and enjoys a cult following around the world too. And the latest in the illustrious franchise takes fans back to the world of Dynasty Warriors 6, with its popular Empires update, something that has become a mainstay of the series since Dynasty Warriors 4.

"As with the previous *Empires* games Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires adds both strategic and political gameplay to the core hacking, slashing and levelling," explains Koei UK's vice president sales and marketing Will Curley.

"In Empires players can break free from the *Dynasty Warriors* storylines and become the protagonist of the action themselves."

Koei UK has been active in its promotion of Dynasty Warriors this year, and that is set to continue with Empires.

A site takeover is planned for Eurogamer, while the firm has booked in-store space in key High Street chains. The publisher also took the game to the May MCM Expo, where 30,000 Japanese games and anime fans had the chance to go hands on with the title.

EMPIRES STRIKES BACK

"The Warriors series has a large and loyal following in the UK," concludes Curley.

"The strong SRP and in-store space we are booking up with retail will entice new users into the series. Dynasty Warriorts 6 was the fastest selling Warriors game ever back in March 2008. We are expecting Empires to continue to build on that momentum upon release."

RELEASED: JUNE 26 FORMATS: PS3 / XBOX 360 **PUBLISHER: KOEI**

DEVELOPER: OMEGA FORCE

PRICE: £29.99 **DISTRIBUTOR: OPEN CONTACT: 01462 476130** WWW.MCVUK.COM MCV 19/06/09 47

2K Games offers consumers a birthday party in a box with its latest casual Wii offering...

by Christopher Dring

THROWING A birthday party for a young one can be a daunting and expensive prospect.

Not only do you have to sacrifice your day to a bunch of pesky kids, but you'll also have to fork out for food, drink, entertainment, banners, party invitations and so on.

Thankfully 2K Games has just the solution with *It's My Birthday* for Nintendo Wii.

Developed by the casual gaming experts at Cat Daddy Games, *It's My Birthday* offers everything you'd expect from your typical McDonald's birthday party – but without the stodgy food. Alongside a full game for kids to enjoy, the product also contains banners, invitations, colouring books and even birthday crowns.

"Getting older is about to become a lot more fun," says VP of business development for 2K Play Steve Lux.

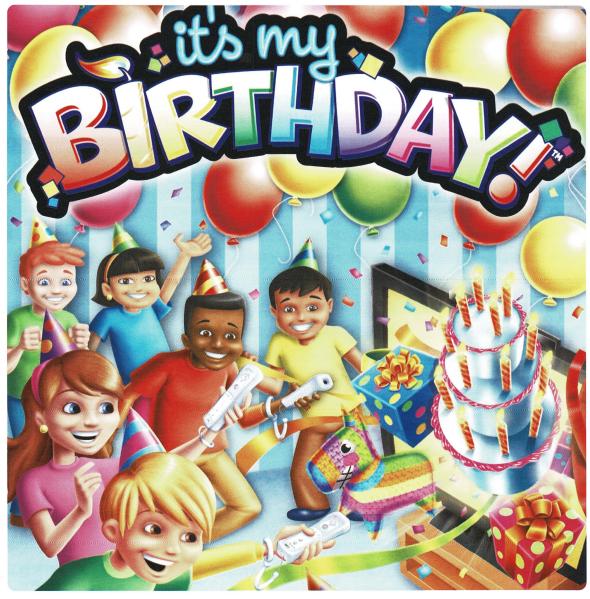
CELEBRATION TIME

"With *It's My Birthday*, we deliver the ultimate home birthday party experience – from new twists on classic games to customised themes. We're excited to give kids the gift of great memories and offer parents meaningful value."

The 'Party In A Box' is certainly a key selling point for *It's My Birthday*.

According to 2K, \$6.5 billion is spent every year on children's birthday parties, with 25 per cent of parents planning their parties ahead of time. The firm has also worked out that the average out-of-home party costs consumers \$350 (£216), and with the recession parents are increasingly choosing to host their kids' parties at home.

So the firm is naturally optimistic that It's My Birthday will be a desirable product for the over-worked mum looking for an affordable alternative (it's only £19.99) to taking the little ones to Thorpe Park.



Yet It's My Birthday is more than just a cheap way of keeping the kids happy once a year. The game is developed by the talented folk at Cat Daddy Games, the same team that created the popular

It's My Birthday delivers the ultimate home birthday party experience. It offers parents meaningful value.

Steve Lux, 2K Play

Carnival Games franchise which has already sold over four million units worldwide.

And the studio has gone to great pains in crafting another casual gaming hit, filled with birthday party-inspired mini-games.

Up to 12 players can take part in over 20 classic children's party games, including Pin The Tail On The Donkey, Sack Race, Piñata, Cake Stacker and everybody's favourite, Musical Chairs.

The birthday boy or girl can also select from one of ten party theme rooms, designed to set the scene. Themes includes Pirates, Princess, Sports and Glamour.

And no birthday party would be complete without a rendition of Happy Birthday (officially licensed for the game), which will play for everyone to sing along with throughout the title – complete with a virtual cake to munch on.

RELEASED: JUNE FORMATS: WII

PUBLISHER: 2K GAMES

DEVELOPER: CAT DADDY GAMES

PRICE: £19.99
DISTRIBUTOR: GEM
CONTACT: 01279 822800

The success of Wii party games such as *Wii Play*, the *Carnival* series and Midway's *Games Party* has made the genre heavily overpopulated on Wii.

Yet 2K has gone to great lengths to give *It's My Birthday* a unique selling point, and the Party In A Box concept will certainly stand out on the shelf.

Furthermore, by targeting kids birthdays, the game has real long-tail potential. Keep an eye out for this when it hits shelves later this month.



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Check out MCVUK.COM/RELEASE-DATES for more

Evil conquers retail as July approaches

Codemasters' Overlord trio and the return of Capcom's original Resident Evil means fans of villains and zombies will have plenty to keep them entertained. For the more heroic, new releases include The Conduit and LEGO Battles...

TITLE	FORMAT	GENRE	PUBLISHER	TELEPHONE	DISTRIBUTOR
JUNE 26th					
Anno 1404	PC	RTS	Ubisoft	0845 362 7769	Trilogy
Another Code R: A Journey Into Lost Memories	Wii	Mystery	Nintendo	0870 027 0985	Koch
Art Of Murder: Hunt For The Puppeteer	PC		City Interactive	0845 362 7769	
415 (1914) 1913 (1944) 1920 (1947) 1930 (1947) 1950 (19		Mystery			Trilogy
Azada	PC	Puzzle	Focus Multimedia	01889 570156	Open
Battlestrike: Shadow Of Stalingrad	XX	Action	City Interactive	0845 362 7769	Trilogy
Be Rich!	PC	Casual	Focus Multimedia	01889 570156	Open
Big Foot Collision Course	DS / Wii	Action	Zushi	01279 822 800	Gem
Brain College: Blood Ties	PC	Self-Improvement	City Interactive	0845 362 7769	Trilogy
Brain College: Lost Island	PC	Self-Improvement	City Interactive	0845 362 7769	Trilogy
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	PS3 / XB0X 360	Action	Koei	01462 476 130	Open
ight Night Round 4	XBOX 360 / PS3	Fighting	EA	0121 625 3388	Centresoft
ritz Chess	Wii / DS	Chess	Deep Silver	0870 027 0985	Koch
ce Age: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	XBOX 360 / PS2 / PS3 / Wii / PC / DS	Action	Activision Blizzard	0121 625 3388	Centresoft
magine My Boutique	DS	Simulation	Ubisoft	0845 362 7769	Trilogy
EGO Battles	DS	RTS	Warner Games	0121 625 3388	Centresoft
ogic Machines	DS	Puzzle	City Interactive	0845 362 7769	Trilogy
ost	PC	Adventure	Focus Multimedia	01889 570156	Open
Nonster Hunter Freedom Unite	PSP	RPG	Capcom	0121 625 3388	Centresoft
My Cooking Coach: Prepare Healthy Recipes	DS	Self-Improvement	Ubisoft	0845 362 7769	Trilogy
Mystery Chronicles: Murder Among Friends	PC	Mystery	Focus Multimedia	01889 570156	Open
Octomania	Wii	Puzzle		0845 234 4242	
			Midas		Mastertron
Overlord 2	PC / PS3 / XB0X 360	Action	Codemasters	01279 822 800	Gem
Overlord Dark Legend	DS .	Action	Codemasters	01279 822 800	Gem
Overlord Minions	Wii	Action	Codemasters	01279 822 800	Gem
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	PSP	RPG	Koei	01462 476 130	Open
Puffins: Island Adventure	DS	Adventure	Majesco	0117 373 6151	Open
Resident Evil: Archives	Wii	Survival Horror	Capcom	0121 625 3388	Centresoft
Royal Marines: Commando	PC	Action	City Interactive	0845 362 7769	Trilogy
Skyscraper Skyscraper	Wii	FPS	Midas	0845 234 4242	Mastertroni
Superstars V8 Racing	XBOX 360 / PS3 / PC	Racing			
			Black Bean	0870 027 0985	Koch
The Big Deal	DS	Cards	Midas	0845 234 4242	Mastertroni
The Conduit	Wii	FPS	Sega	0121 625 3388	Sega
ransformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	360 / PS2 / PS3 / Wii / PC / DS / PSP	Action	Activision Blizzard	0121 625 3388	Centresoft
/alhalla Knights Episode 2	PSP	RPG	Rising Star Games	01582 433700	Centresoft
Vorld Of Goo	PC	Puzzle	Mastertronic	0845 234 4242	Open
JULY 3rd					,
rain College: Call Of Atlantis	PC	Self-Improvement	City Interactive	0845 362 7769	Trilogy
Brain College: Magic Shop	PC	Self-Improvement	City Interactive	0845 362 7769	
all Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	PC / PS3 / XB0X 360	FPS			Trilogy
			Ubisoft	0845 362 7769	Trilogy
arm Frenzy 2	DS	Mini-games	City Interactive	0845 362 7769	Trilogy
arry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	PSP / DS / PC / Wii / PS3 / PS2 / 360	Action	EA	0121 625 3388	Centresoft
loon	DS	FPS	Rising Star Games	01582 433700	Centresoft
Peady, Steady, Cook: The Game	DS / Wii	Cooking	Mindscape	0870 027 0985	Koch
ygar: The Battle Of Argus	Wii	Action/Adventure	Rising Star Games	01582 433700	Centresoft
aints Row 2 Platinum/Classic	XBOX 360 / PS3	Action	THQ	0121 506 9585	Advantage
pace Camp	Wii / DS	Mini-games	Activision Blizzard	0121 625 3388	Centresoft
iger Woods PGA Tour 10	XBOX 360 / PS2 / PS3 / Wii / PSP	Golf	EA	0121 625 3388	Centresoft
WE SmackDown Vs RAW 2009 Platinum/Classic	XBOX 360 / PS2 / PS3 / PSP	Sports	THQ	0121 506 9585	Advantage
ULY 24th	NDON 300 / 1 32 / 1 33 / 1 31	Sports	Inv	0121 300 9303	Advantage
	DO / W::			570000000000000000000000000000000000000	MATERIA - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 - 100 -
Calvin Tucker's Redneck Jamboree	PC / Wii	Mini-games	Zushi	01279 822 800	Gem
City Life	DS	Strategy	Ubisoft	0845 362 7769	Trilogy
Clever Kids: Farmyard Fun	Wii	Kids	Midas	0845 234 4242	Mastertroni
Clever Kids: Pirates	Wii	Kids	Midas	0845 234 4242	Mastertroni
Fritz Chess	PS3	Chess	Deep Silver	0870 027 0985	Koch

MUSTSTOCK

.....OVERLORD

Released: June 26th Format: Xbox 360, PS3, PC, Wii, DS

Publisher: Codemasters **Distributor:** Gem **Contact:** 01279 822800



The direct sequel to 2007's Overlord is accompanied by two companion titles on Nintendo formats. While Overlord II follows on from the first game, Dark Legend tells a unique tale to Wii owners and Minions sees DS fans commanding their goblinlike henchmen in battle.

MUSTSTOCKRESIDENT EVIL: ARCHIVES

Released: June 26th Format: Wii Publisher: Capcom Distributor: Centresoft Contact: 0121 625 3388



The original *Resident Evil* is remastered for Wii. Capcom resurrects its groundbreaking survival horror title allowing fans of the series to enjoy an enhanced version of the first game, with exclusive content that never appeared in the 1996 PlayStation release.



COMING THIS SUMMER SOURCEBOOK 2009

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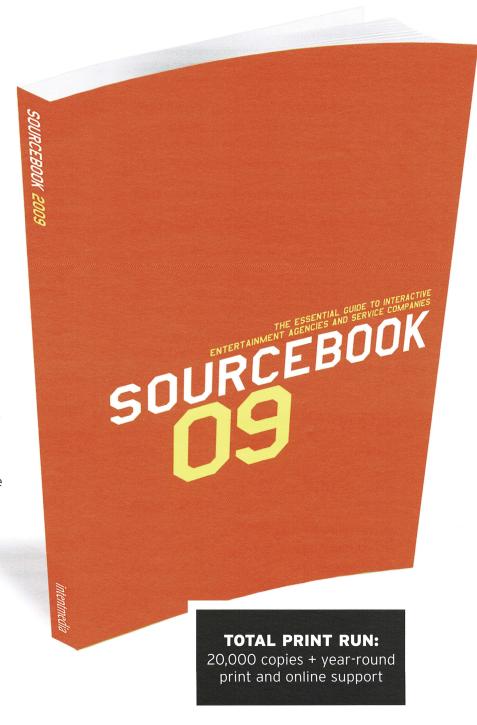
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[RETAIL REACTION]



ONLINE CAN BE HARD WORK

IT'S ALL WELL and good for an indie to have a website, but unfortunately it can be tough to compete with more established retailers. Take a look at Play.com - they provide cheap delivery and we can't even match them on

price. It's great to have a website, but indies should recognise it's hard work - the tough part is price-matching.

There are other ways to compete, but they don't quite have the impact that competitive pricing does. The only thing we can really compete on is the pre-owned section.

We have a website and the sales are very, very thin. Not everybody has a credit card to use. If the customer is too young, for example, there's nothing you can do about it.

"There are advantages to having a website, but it's hard to make it work as an independent retailer. We have to work hard to stand out from our competitors."

Of course, there are advantages to having a website, but it's hard to make it work as an independent retailer. My website is very important to my business, but we work hard to stand out from our competitors.

We have a newsletter, which we use to update our customers on the new releases, the latest hardware and any pre-order offers. If they do pre-order, they get their games for a cheaper price. That's the only unique offer we have at this present time - it doesn't do our margins any good, but it's the only way we can attract more customers.

We have to come up with really good ideas to attract more people and to improve sales, because we can't match our bigger rivals on prices.

Sam Seamann, N1 Games

INDIE CHARTS - ALL FORMATS

PUBLISHER	TITLE/FORMAT	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK
DEVELOPER: EA PUBLISHER: EA	THE SIMS 3 FORMAT: PC		
THO	RED FACTION GUERRILLA 360	NEW	2
THO	RED FACTION GUERRILLA PS3	NEW	2
NINTENDO	POKÉMON PLATINUM DS	1	4
SONY	INFAMOUS SPECIAL EDITION PS3	NEW	5
THO	UFC 2009: UNDISPUTED 360	2	6
SONA	INFAMOUS PS3	3	7
SQUARE ENIX	STAR OCEAN 360	NEW	8
CODEMASTERS	FUEL 360	NEW	9
SEGA	VIRTUA TENNIS 2009 360	8	10





Charts compiled by Game Guide/Complete EPOS Solutions. For more information about Complete EPOS Solutions call 01543 370002. For more information about the Game Guide call 01606 836347.

RETAIL BIZ: NEWS

MCV offers a weekly digest of the latest news on the High Street...

RETAIL SALES SLUMP AGAIN IN MAY

UK retail failed to halt the downward momentum shown in March and April by suffering a small like-for-like sales decrease compared to the same period in 2008.

Retail Week reported that total like-for-likes fell by 1.5 per cent, with the fashion industry faring worst. Outside of that sector there were some improvements, particularly amongst luxury goods and gifts. Sales of homewares and big-ticket items remain very weak.

> "Despite some tentative signs that the economy is starting to improve, retailers are still finding life on the High Street especially tough," the head of retail at analyst BDO Stoy Hayward Rupert Eastell stated.

"However, it's not all doom and gloom. Great products, coupled with the warmer weather, have meant that many retailers are continuing to outperform the poor expectations assumed at the start of the year.

"Although we would caution against calling the bottom of the market, these results bode well for the remainder of 2009."

UK GAMES MARKET HOLDS FIRM

The UK video games market weekly value continued to rise in the week ending June 6th, following the release of The Sims 3 and Red Faction: Guerrilla.

According to MCV calculations, based on the GfK-ChartTrack/ELSPA weekly report. the UK market hit £23.5 million, a rise of three per cent when compared to the previous week. However, unit sales are down by one per cent, falling slightly to 959,166 units sold.

HEAD ENTERTAINMENT CLOSES BLUEWATER BRANCH

Head Entertainment in Bluewater was closed last week, with rumours suggesting the chain is on the verge of collapse.

This is the second Head store to close, with HMV replacing the firm's outlet in the Manchester Arndale Centre. And rumours are circulating that Head in Sheffield Meadowhall could be the next to go.

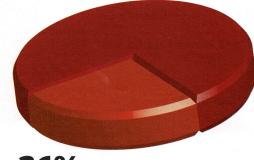
Head Entertainment was made up of nine former Zavvi stores before the closures, and is run by former Zavvi MD Simon Douglas and partner Les Whitfield. The chain originally employed 160 staff, and sold mostly old Zavvi stock.

FOR UP-TO-DATE NEWS ON THE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS ON THE UK HIGH STREET, CHECK OUT:

WWW.MCVUK.COM/RETAIL-BIZ

MCV POLL

DID THIS YEAR'S E3 LIVE UP TO **EXPECTATIONS?**



26% NO

The wait was worth it. While the industry recognised 2009 as a 'make or break' year for E3, the vast majority of participants in the latest MCV online study believe the show was a success.

■ Take part in MCV's next poll at www.mcvuk.com

















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MARGIN MAKER

LOGIC 3'S SoundStation for the Nintendo Wii offers consumers a complete storage, charging and audio solution. No longer will they have to buy separate remote chargers, speakers and console stands as this device forms all three.

The peripheral has been designed to complement the Wii with its white colour scheme and soft blue light



illumination. The stand holds the Wii console, with two speakers either side. The speakers can be raised, revealing storage space for the Nunchuks.

Behind the two speakers are charging docks for the Wii Remotes, which recharge the batteries included with the SoundStation, Also bundled with the device is a remote control for the speakers.



OF THE WEEK

For £169.99 - a saving of almost £95 - HMV customers can pick up a 60Gb Xbox 360 with an extra wireless controller, Burnout Paradise: Ultimate Box, Trivial Pursuit and Connect 4 Arcade.

FROM THE **FRONTLINE**

This week, Nindie.com interviews Darren Greening from Game On...

How has the market been for you so far this year?

Early sales in the first quarter of the year were greater than anticipated, but as all other retail outlets would agree the credit crunch has really hit home. Fantastic releases last year like Wii Fit, GTA IV and Mario Kart gave us amazing sales, but this year's turnover will struggle to match it.

What games are you most looking forward to this summer?

Personally, I'm waiting for Fight Night Round 4 and Batman: Arkham Asvlum. Commercially, Wii Sports Resort and Pokemon Platinum will push sales.

What has been performing particularly well for you?



Peripheral sales have driven our business. Guide books, controllers, pads, sticks and so forth have great margins which helps in propping up heavily discounted software - no thanks to online retailers and the supermarkets.

What has been underperforming?

PSP, PSP, PSP... oh, did I mention PSP? The lack of software, in particular.

What makes your store so unique?

A relaxed atmosphere with a gaming area where you can sit down and play any game of your choice. Weekly competitions encourage new sales and our ordering system means any game can be sourced and ordered. Would GAME or any other multi-national order one unit of stock for a customer? It's all about giving customers what they want, when they want it.

PRICE CHECK











Walk with Me

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gamestation [®]	£39.99	£44.99	£34.99	£39.99	£49.99

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amazon.co.uk	£34.96	£29.99	£29.99	£29.99	£38.95
clickagame	£34.95	£38.95	£29.95	£38.95	£41.95
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NINTENDO DS [FULL PRICE]

PUBLISHER DEVELOPER: NINTENDO **PUBLISHER:** NINTENDO 2 PROFESSOR LAYTON: CURIOUS VILLAGE NINTENDO 3 **MYSTERY STORIES** GSP/AVANQUEST DR KAWASHIMA'S BRAIN TRAINING NINTENDO UBISOFT THE MYSTERY OF THE MUMMY 16 **GTA: CHINATOWN WARS** TAKE 2 **WALK WITH ME! WALKING ROUTINE?** NINTENDO **MMARIO KART DS** NINTENDO **NEW SUPER MARIO BROS.** NINTENDO **CLUB PENGUIN: ELITE PENGUIN FORCE**

PLAYSTATION 2 [FULL PRICE]

THIS	WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
		FIFA 9 DEVELOPER: EA CANADA PUBLISHER: EA	
2	2	CALL OF DUTY: WORLD AT WAR	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
3	1	BEN 10: ALIEN FORCE	D3P
4	NEW	INDIANA JONES STAFF OF KINGS	LUCASARTS
5	10	GUITAR HERO: METALLICA	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
6	5	GUITAR HERO: WORLD TOUR	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
7	8	TOMB RAIDER: UNDERWORLD	EIDOS
8	7	TOMB RAIDER: UNDERWORLD	EIDOS
9	4	X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
10	6	NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERCOVER	EA

PSP [FULL PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST Week	TITLE PUI	BLISHER
4		FIFA 09	
		DEVELOPER: EA PUBLISHER: EA	
2	2	RESISTANCE: RETRIBUTION	SONY
3	3	BEN 10: ALIEN FORCE	D3P
4	4	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2009	SEGA
5	6	NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERCOVER	EA
6	9	SBK 09 SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPS	BLACK BEAN
7	5	X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE ACTIVISION	N BLIZZARD
8	7	WWE SMACKDOWN VS RAW 2009	THO
9	10	LEGO BATMAN WA	RNER BROS.
10	8	ACTION PACK (RIVAL SWORD, DRIVER 76, R6V)	UBISOFT

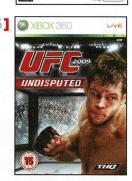


[2] XBOX 360 LIVE

RED FACTION

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[ENTERTAINMENT - ALL PRICES]

TOP 40 ALL

L		FORMAT: PC DEVELOPER: THE SIMS S	TUDIO Publisher: I
THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHE
2	NEW	PROTOTYPE 360, PS3.PC	ACTIVISION BLIZZAI
3	2	RED FACTION: GUERRILLA 360, PS3	TH
4	5	WII FIT Wii	NINTENE
5	3	UFC 2009: UNDISPUTED 360, PS3	TH
6	4	EA SPORTS ACTIVE Wii	
7	16	COD: WORLD AT WAR 360, PS3, Wii, PS2, DS, PC	ACTIVISION BLIZZAF
8	6	POKÉMON PLATINUM DS	NINTENE
9	8	INFAMOUS PS3	102
10	11	FIFA '09 360, PS3, Wii, PS2, PSP, DS, PC	E
11	9	VIRTUA TENNIS 2009 PS3, 360, PC, Wii	SEC
12	8	GUITAR HERO: METALLICA Wii, PS2, PS3, 360	ACTIVISION BLIZZAF
13	NEW	GRAND SLAM TENNIS WII	
14	13	COD4: MODERN WARFARE 360, PS3, PC, DS	ACTIVISION BLIZZAF
15	14	MARIO KART WII Wii	NINTENE
16	10	TERMINATOR SALVATION PC, 360, PS3	WARNER BRO
17	19	WII PLAY Wii	NINTEND
18	24	PROFESSOR LAYTON: CURIOUS VILL	AGE DS NINTENE
19	17	MY FITNESS COACH Wii	UBISO
20	27	JILLIAN MICHAEL'S FITNESS ULTIMATUR	√ Wii KOCH MED

PC CD-ROM

[FULL PRICE]

PHRIICHER

WEEK	WEEK	IIILL	LODEISHER
		THE SIMS 3 DEVELOPER: THE SIMS STUDIO PUBLISHER: EA	
2	2	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2009	SEGA
3	3	EMPIRE: TOTAL WAR	SEGA
4	4	WOW: WRATH OF THE LICH KING	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
5	NEW	PROTOTYPE	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
6	5	COD 4: MODERN WARFARE	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
7	7	WOW: BATTLE CHEST	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
8	8	THE SIMS 2: DOUBLE DELUXE	EA
9	11	GRAND THEFT AUTO IV	ROCKSTAR
10	6	FALLOUT 3	BETHESDA

13/06/09

MCV 19/06/09 **53**

[ANALYSIS]



Highest New Entry Highest Ton 40 Climber

THE PC MARKET shows its strength as *The Sims 3* holds onto first place, driven by a combination of a strong, loyal fanbase and widespread advertising. Activision's original superhero IP *Prototype* had to settle for second place.

It was also an underwhelming week for Activision's other new entry. Despite extensive TV advertising over the weekend, *Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings* failed to enter the Top 30. However, the publisher saw triumph with *Call Of Duty: World At War*, which was propelled to seventh place by a range of recent price promotions.

Both the Wii MotionPlus peripheral and EA's Grand Slam Tennis - the first compatible game made a low-key debut this week. The game only reached thirteenth place and failed to outsell EA Sports Active and Wii Fit in the Wii charts.

James.Batchelor@intentmedia.co.uk

FORMATS

		Highest New Entry Highest	lop 40 Climber
21	15	SACRED 2: FALLEN ANGEL 360, PS3	KOCH MEDIA
22	21	MARIO & SONIC: OLYMPIC GAMES Wii, DS	SEGA
23	25	GUITAR HERO: WORLD TOUR PS3, Wii, 360, PS2 ACTIV	ISION BLIZZARD
24	12	FUEL 360, PS3, PC	CODEMASTERS
25	28	CARNIVAL: FUNFAIR GAMES Wii, DS	2K PLAY
26	29	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2009 PC, PSP	SEGA
27	18	STAR OCEAN: THE LAST HOPE 360	SQUARE ENIX
28	33	SEGA SUPERSTAR TENNIS Wii, 360, PS3, PS2, DS	SEGA
29	23	THE MYSTERY OF THE MUMMY DS	UBISOFT
30	30	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2 360, Wii, DS, PC	MAJESCO
31	20	MYSTERY STORIES DS 6	SP/AVANQUEST
32	NEW	INDIANA JONES STAFF OF KINGS WII, PS2,PSP	DS LUCASARTS
33	36	GRAND THEFT AUTO IV 360, PS3, PC	ROCKSTAR
34	39	LEGO INDIANA JONES PS3, PS2, Wii, 360, PSP, DS, PC	LUCASARTS
35	26	BIG FAMILY GAMES Wii	THQ
36	32	DR KAWASHIMA'S BRAIN TRAINING DS	NINTENDO
37	31	BEN 10: ALIEN FORCE PS2, Wii, PSP, DS	D3P
38	RE	GTA: CHINATOWN WARS	ROCKSTAR
39	RE	WALK WITH ME! WALKING ROUTINE DS	NINTENDO
40	34	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2009 Wii, PS3, 360	KONAMI

PS3 [FULL PRICE]

EEK	WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
		PROTOTYPE DEVELOPER: RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION BLIZZARD	
2	1	INFAMOUS	SONY
3	2	UFC 2009: UNDISPUTED	THO
4	3	RED FACTION: GUERRILLA	THO
5	4	VIRTUA TENNIS 2009	SEGA
6	12	CALL OF DUTY: WORLD AT WAR	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
7	5	TERMINATOR SALVATION	WARNER BROS.
8	7	CALL OF DUTY: MODERN WARFARE	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
9	8	FIFA '09	EA
10	11	KILLZONE	SONA

WII [FULL PRICE]

HIS	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
		WII FIT DEVELOPER: NINTENDO PUBLISHER: NINTENDO	
2	1	EA SPORTS ACTIVE	EA
3	NEW	GRAND SLAM TENNIS	EA
4	3	MARIO KART WII	NINTENDO
5	10	DONKEY KONG: JUNGLE BEAT	NINTENDO
6	5	MARIO & SONIC AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES	SEGA
7	4	GUITAR HERO: METALLICA	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
8	10	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 2	MAJESCO
9	18	BOOM BLOX BASH PARTY	EA
10	NEW	INDIANA JONES AND THE STAFF OF KINGS	LUCASARTS

PC CD-ROM [BUDGET PRICE]

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
		WORLD OF WARCRAFT DEVELOPER: BLIZZARD PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION BLIZZARD	
2	5	AMAZING ADVENTURES: LOST TOME	3 FOCUS
3	4	MYSTERY CASE FILES: RAVENHEAR	ST FOCUS
4	6	MYSTERY IN LONDON: JACK THE RIP	PER FOCUS
5	2	THEME HOSPITAL	SOLD OUT
6	3	WOW: THE BURNING CRUSADE ACT	IVISION BLIZZARI
7	10	MEDAL OF HONOR: ALLIED ASSAULT DEL	UXE E
8	8	THE ORANGE BOX	E.A
9	7	ROLLERCOASTER TYCOON 3	ATAR
10	12	MYSTERYVILLE 2	MASTERTRONIC

XBOX 360 [FULL PRICE]

EEK	WEEK	TITLE	PUBLISHER
		PROTOTYPE DEVELOPER: RADICAL ENTERTAINMENT PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION BLIZZARD	
2	1	RED FACTION: GUERRILLA	THO
3	2	UFC 2009: UNDISPUTED	THO
4	14	CALL OF DUTY: WORLD AT WAR	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
5	9	CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
6	3	GUITAR HERO: METALLICA	ACTIVISION BLIZZARD
7	4	TERMINATOR SALVATION	WARNER BROS
8	5	STAR OCEAN: THE LAST HOPE	SQUARE ENI)
9	7	VIRTUA TENNIS 2009	SEG
10	6	FUEL	CODEMASTER

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS



GERMANY

THE GERMAN government has moved one step closer to a sweeping national ban on violent games in a move that could not only dent the European market for mature games but also threaten the country's games industry.

16 of the country's interior ministers have joined forces to petition the German parliament to ban both the production and distribution of violent games. They are calling for measures to be put in place prior to the German elections at the end of September.

The move follows similar calls from senior German police chief Heini Schmitt, who linked violent gaming to the tragic school shootings that blighted Winnenden in March.

There would be several possible consequences were the moves to come to fruition. Not only could the lost sales of said titles dent the overall revenue generated by the industry, but if Germany's move is seen to be a success it could put pressure on the EU to make the laws more widespread.

In addition, there could be grave consequences for German studios seen to be producing violent games, such as *Crysis* developers Crytek.



SWEDEN

CONTROVERSIAL political body The Pirate Party has won a seat in the European parliament after capitalising on the pro-Pirate Bay movement in homeland Sweden.

The official website of the party, which has no official affiliation with the headline-grabbing BitTorrent site Pirate Bay, states that it "wants to fundamentally reform copyright law, get rid of the patent system, and ensure that citizens' rights to privacy are respected".

It secured one of Sweden's 18 European
Parliament seats after grabbing 7.4 per cent of
country's vote. The party's membership rocketed
following the media coverage of the Pirate Bay trial,
with swelling numbers overnight transforming it into
Sweden's third biggest political party.



USA

AN ESA fact sheet that was distributed at E3 this year revealed that 68 per cent of Americans play video games, while 42 per cent of US homes have a games console.

Entitled the *Essential Facts About the Computer* and *Video Game Industry*, the book revealed that the average age of American gamers is 35. It also stated that 60 per cent of gamers are male, while 40 per cent are female.

In terms of who buys video games, the average age is 39, with 52 per cent of purchasers being male and 48 per cent female. 92 per cent of the time, a parent is present during game purchases. Furthermore, 43 per cent of Americans have purchased or plan to buy one or more video games this year.

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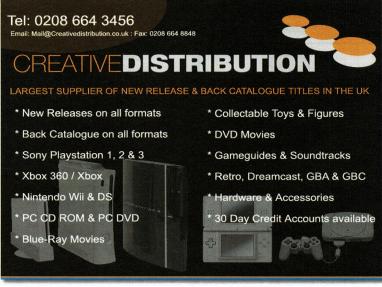
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EDITORIAL PLANNER

Some of the special issues coming up in MCV, the only trade publication that covers all sectors of the market...

FRIDAY JUNE 26th

SUMMER PERIPHERALS SPECIAL

The accessories sector enjoyed a fantastic 2008, with the continued success of Wii, DS, *Rock Band* and *Guitar Hero* having a positive effect on the market. And now the leading peripherals firms are preparing to launch their latest range of items for the summer period. *MCV* provides a detailed rundown of the innovative products that are set to take the retail community by storm.

TERRITORY REPORT: FRANCE

France is one of Europe's biggest video game territories. *MCV* takes a closer look at how the country's video game output is evolving, and speaks to the key retailers, developers and publishers about the current challenges affecting the region.

FRIDAY JULY 3rd

GAMES RETAIL BUYERS GUIDE

The High Street is a fast moving sector, with personnel trading places continually. At the same time, new retailers enter the market or expand their games departments. And so, to give you a helping hand in identifying the movers and shakers of the High Street, *MCV* is providing a comprehensive guide to all the key executives responsible for getting your titles out to the market/negotiating you down on margin.

FRIDAY JULY 10th

IDEF REVIEW

MCV reflects on this year's Interactive & Digital Entertainment Festival, one of Europe's key interactive entertainment trade shows. We report back on the companies and games in attendance, speaking to key players in our industry and other exhibitors.

FRIDAY JULY 17th

TERRITORY REPORT: SOUTH AMERICA

In the latest MCV Territory Report, we look to the developing countries of South America and their growing video game industries, charting the course these markets are taking to improve themselves. We discuss what challenges publishers face and who the key retailers are.

DEVELOP CONFERENCE

MCV provides a guide to the major UK development event taking place in Brighton. This will include a preview of the Develop Awards.

FRIDAY JULY 24th

BUDGET SOFTWARE SPECIAL FOCUS

With the economy still suffering, *MCV* looks at how publishers can take advantage of the budget software market. We look at the growing trends and recent success stories, as well as exploring the advantages value software offers everyone from retailers to consumers.

FRIDAY AUGUST 7th

BACK TO SCHOOL SOFTWARE FOCUS

As the summer holidays draw to a close, parents and their children turn their attention away from leisure and entertainment titles and towards preparing for the new academic year. *MCV* investigates what part video games can play in this and what opportunities the sudden need for school supplies can present to both publishers and retailers.

FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT:

CHRIS.DRING@INTENTMEDIA.CO.UK

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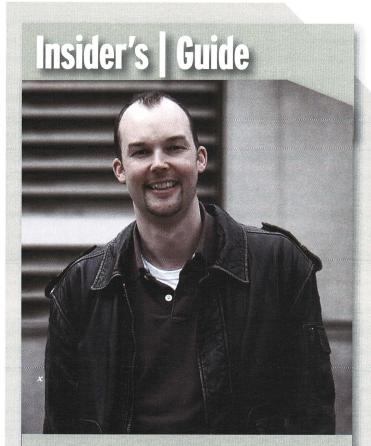
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We speak to Axis Animation's executive producer and joint MD Richard Scott...

Tell us about your services?

Axis is a leading UK animation studio providing design, direction and animation to games clients across the world. We offer an end-to-end creative solution for Trailers, X-Movies and Cutscenes, from script development, design and storyboarding to sound design and post production.

What's the best thing about your job?

Being part of the team who put together the right type of creative ideas that make clients say yes. It allows me to be creative without being hands on.

Any exciting new developments happening at your company?

We started a new division called Flaunt at the beginning of 2009. Flaunt specialises in

providing design and directing talent across a range of live action and animation styles, broadening our creative offering beyond high-end computer graphics.

We are also developing a new internal pipeline to be able to produce real-time cut scenes with style and creative flare, but also quickly and efficiently.

How are you coping with the current economic climate?

We have done a few things to help us through what was expected to be a difficult time. We're investing in our people and systems, we are continuing to do fantastic work, we are offering something extra creatively to our clients and we are doing more work in the USA and abroad, widening our client base

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DIARY DATES '09

From the MCV Awards to our next Pub Quiz, here are all the essential industry dates to get in your diary...

JUNE

GAME HORIZON CONFERENCE

Tuesday, June 23rd -Wednesday, June 24th

The Sage, Newcastle www.gamehorizonconference.com

GAMEPLAN 2009

Wednesday, June 24th -Friday, June 26th Surrey, UK

IDEE

Tuesday, June 30th Thursday, July 2nd

Palais des Festivales, Cannes, France www.idefexpo.com

JULY

DEVELOP CONFERENCE 2009

Tuesday, July 14th -Thursday, July 16th

Hilton Metropole, Brighton www.develop-conference.com

DEVELOP INDUSTRY EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Wednesday, July 15th

Hilton Metropole, Brighton www.developmag.com

GAMES CONVENTION ONLINE

Friday, July 31st -Sunday, August 2nd

Leipzig Messe, Germany www.leipziger-messe.com

AUGUST

EDINBURGH INT. FESTIVAL

Monday, August 10th -Sunday, August 16th

TBC, Edinburgh www.edinburghinteractivefestival.com

GDC EUROPE

Monday, August 17th -Wednesday, August 19th

Cologne, Germany www.gdceurope.com

GAMESCOM

Wednesday, August 19th -Sunday, August 23rd

Cologne, Germany www.gamescom-cologne.com

DENET OF

THE DEVELOP QUIZ

Thursday, June 18th Sway Bar, Holborn *jaz.kandola* @intentmedia.co.uk

The latest outing for this essential networking event will pit 20 teams of five against each other.

Studios, publishers, QA, recruitment and localisation companies are all invited to attend, with a full night of entertainment and competition on offer.

First prize is a £2,000 advertising credit in Develop print or online, plus a trophies and bottles of champagne.



MCV/XBOX 360 PUB QUIZ

Thursday, September 24th

Sway Bar, Holborn dave.roberts
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The Xbox 360/MCV Pub Quiz is now established as one of the industry's favourite nights out.

Taking place every three months or so at the rather swanky Sway Bar in Holborn, it brings together the market's leading publishers, retailers and media to compete for some pretty substantial prizes.

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MCV FORUM

ELSPA: R4 devices are illegal

I WOULD LIKE to congratulate Christopher Dring for his sensible and accurate response to the rant about R4 devices by mystery reader 'R' in the MCV Forum recently. I deal with members of the public and retailers on a regular basis who still believe that it is legal to sell game copying devices. But they are wrong. These items are illegal under the country's Copyright and Trademark laws.

It is interesting to see that some people still believe that other functions for such copying devices make them legal, but that is simply not the case. As Christopher correctly



stated, it is possible to purchase products that offer the other functions yet do not play copied games. Instead, these devices are increasingly being sold – online and in markets, at car boot sales and so on – which are intentionally packaged with copied games.
Last year we seized more than

250,000 copied games discs and every disc contained just commercially developed games. No disc contained a single homebrew game application.

We have carried out a large number of criminal investigations and raids already this year with Trading Standards and Police around the country and criminal prosecutions are in hand. The cost of IP theft to the country's games industry is enormous. Making AAA titles is an expensive process – and when thieves steal these games by coping them they not only erode the viability of our industry, and with it its creativity, but they can also directly cost our industry vital jobs in the UK.

John Hillier

Manager, ELSPA Intellectual Property Crime Unit

A tribute to Richard Pitt

SITTING IN AN airport lounge, minutes away from flying off to a sun-drenched honeymoon destination, I received a phone call of a tragic nature and have spent the last two weeks reflecting upon whether or not I should write this letter.

The phone call was an old buddy and producer of mine, sadly informing me that a mutual friend and past work colleague had passed away at the age of just 34.

Our industry may be relatively small, yet we are blessed with an abundance of personalities, most of which adorn these pages on a regular basis. When one thinks of video game television, readers instantly think of the Dominic Diamonds, the Violet Berlins, hell, some may even raise a smile when they hear the name 'Big Boy Barry'. But the truth of the matter is that it's the creative talents of the dedicated writers, producers and

researchers that are responsible for the success of the shows.

My friend Richard Pitt was a writer. And a producer. And a researcher. And a presenter. And a voice-over artist. And a musician. And a poet. You can see where I'm going with this; suffice to say that Richard was a man blessed with many abilities.

I met Richard when I began presenting for Sky TV's The Computer Channel. He was a researcher at the time but within weeks Richard began writing the show almost single handedly, no mean feet when the programme ran five days a week. The show survived in various guises for almost two years. The budget was small, the money was almost nonexistent and everyone involved in the production would curse daily about the insane schedule. But what I wouldn't give to re-live those days again.

Like the golden age of video game programming, what was

lacking in budget was made up for in creativity, something which came remarkably naturally to Richard. His talents didn't go un-noticed, soon he was presenting on air, writing the show, co-producing and editing it as well. Richard could effortlessly move from project to project, presenting for The Computer Channel, flitting over to work on Channel Four's GamesMaster and then back to Sky One where he was a major creative force behind the later series of Games World. I was in awe of the guy's endless energy and creativity.

Outside of his day job, Richard was an enormously talented writer and musician, fronting his own band and responsible for organising and headlining many a cabaret night.

Rich was a true friend and always said it like it was. I remember showing him my new TV showreel. My agent asked me to update the reel and include some new footage from recent TV work. I spent ages and a small fortune getting it produced. Proud-as-punch I showed it to Rich. "It's shit," he said. Of course, he was simply trying to help me.

Two weeks later, Richard had bribed a professional editor who he was working with at the time, and armed with a sackful of tapes, and a six-pack of beer, we broke into a highly expensive production suite at first light on a Saturday morning and Richard worked for two 12-hour days to re-cut my showreel, refusing to leave until the job was done.

He was a perfectionist in this way, almost obsessive and if Richard did a job, he would do it better than anyone else or not at all. I was thrilled, and still use the showreel to this very day. "What do I owe you mate? Just name your price," I said. "Don't worry about it, just buy me a beer," was his response.

I think this summed the guy up perfectly. Honest, direct, talented and only interested in doing a great job.

Truly, the industry has lost someone very special indeed.

Alex Verrey MadCatz



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ON THE BALL

This week, we take a look

and his new pal...

behind the scenes at the sweaty MCV and Xbox 360 GamesFives tournament, and catch up with Mastertronic's Garry Williams

The MCV and Xbox 360 GamesFives was a roaring success last week. Overall champions Real So So Bad (pictured right, centre) wore D3P on their shirts, but included industry names such as PlayV's Luiz Ferreria. They picked up a £1,500 donation to a charity of their choice, choosing The Meningitis Trust and Field of Dreams - and earned a 360 for each team member. Runnersup were Rocksteady, whose Glenn Garner (pictured immediately right) won the golden boot and man of the tournament award, bagging 47 goals. The plate was won by Gem's St. George's Gems, defeating Imagine Publishing in the final.







MCV takes soundings from its Retail Advisory Board on the biggest issues of the day. The current members are...



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DUNCAN CROSS, ASDA



MARTYN GIBBS, **GAMESTATION**



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◆ CAN HE FIX IT?

Erm, we're not sure. But he sure can hang with the big boys. After Spike Lee and Gus from EastEnders comes Mastertronic's Garry Williams' latest celebrity stalking victim... Bob The Builder. We'd usually make jokes about 'hard helmets' and 'workman's tools' here (snigger snigger), but this time, the picture speaks a thousand words. At least he's now doing a standard 'thumbs up' - and not the middle-aged 'hip hop hands' we've seen in Garry's most recent pics. On a different note, we actually feel sorry for Bob here. What happened to that wholesome work ethic? He's become nothing but a tourist attraction - scrabbling for the easy gratuities of fame. Sure, his three-fingered hand and wacky dungarees still say: 'Yes we can!' But those eyes. Those cold dead eves. He's a dark character. Let's leave him alone with his misery.

SLIPPED A DISC

Congratulations goes to Pat Spry, manageress of CHIPS Consett, County Durham. She won a a Disc-Go-Devil disc repair machine, a starter pack and the support of TDR's marketing for a six month period in a special competition for indie retailers in MCV three weeks ago. Entrants were asked to answer why they love their disc repair machine Pat's innovative answer? "I love my disc repair machine because.....it's tough, it's mean and gets umpteen discs clean, customers happy hence the broad gleam!" She's a poet. Now she knows it.

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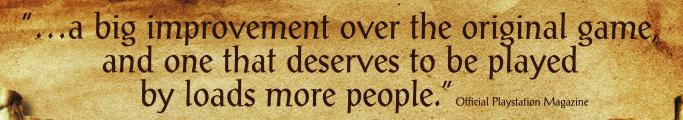
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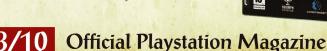














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